



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

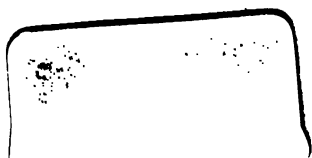
About Google Book Search

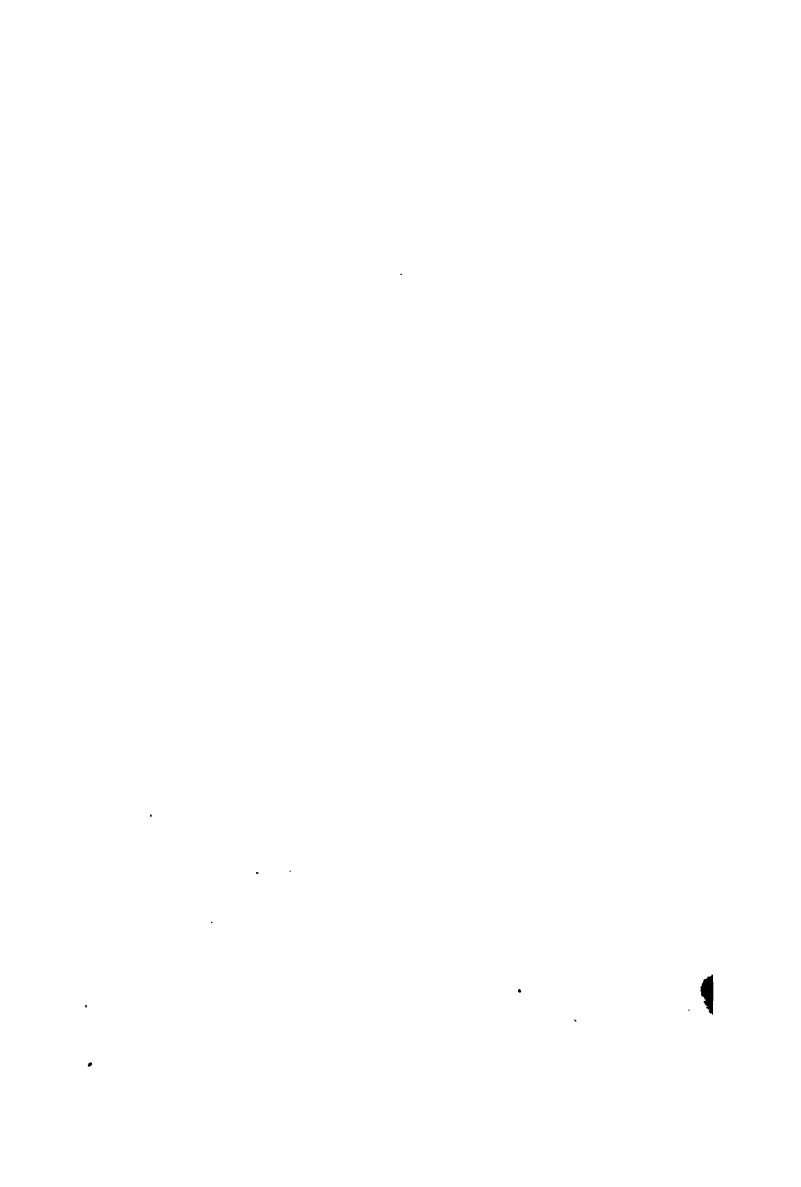
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

HOLY FOOTPRINTS

REV. F. WHITFIELD, M.A.









*Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & CO.
Edinburgh and London.*

HOLY FOOTPRINTS.

BY THE

REV. FREDERICK WHITFIELD, M.A.

VICAR OF ST. MARY'S, HASTINGS;

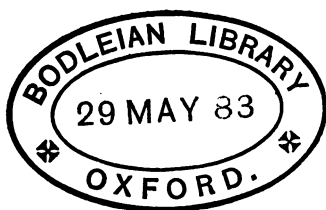
AUTHOR OF "VOICES FROM THE VALLEY," "TRUTH IN CHRIST,"
"SACRED POEMS AND PROSE," ETC. ETC.

LONDON:

JAMES NISBET & CO., 21 BERNERS STREET.

MDCCLXXXIII.

141 . n 327



PREFACE.

THE following chapters have been delivered as addresses during my ministry from time to time. In that shape they have already proved acceptable ; and my only desire in publishing them, is, that the Lord may use them for the instruction and comfort of others.

Reader, we are living in an evil day. The tide of worldliness, of error, superstition, and sin, is setting in with inconceivable rapidity. The velocity of the current is carrying along with it many an undecided soul, and will yet carry along with it multitudes of others. It speaks loudly to all God's people to draw closer together ; to come out boldly on the Lord's side ; to live nearer than ever to Jesus ; to be more than ever separate from the world.

Let decision for Christ mark your words and conduct. *Speak out* boldly for your Saviour. Let no cowardly shrinking keep you back. Bear a marked testimony for Christ, "*out of season*," as well as "*in season*." The honour of bearing the Master's cross will be yours only for a few days longer. The heavier the cross, the brighter the crown in the day that is at hand. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

ST. MARY'S, HASTINGS,
1882.

CONTENTS.



| | PAGE |
|--|------|
| I. THE LIFE CALL | I |
| II. THE CHERUBIM | 20 |
| III. THE GUEST CHAMBER | 31 |
| IV. HOLY COMMUNION | 49 |
| V. THE SMOKING FURNACE AND THE BURN- ING LAMP | 62 |
| VI. WEIGHTS AND SINS | 94 |
| VII. THE MOURNER | 135 |

HOLY FOOTPRINTS.



I.

THE LIFE CALL.

MARK iii. 13-16.

It has been beautifully remarked that "God's narratives in the New Testament are like many-sided polished stones, so cut as to reflect their lustre in different directions." There is scarcely a narrative in the New Testament that does not portray to discerning and thoughtful minds, the glorious character of the Lord Jesus in one or other of His different characters. He is the METROPOLIS of the Scriptures, and there is no book, no chapter, no verse, through which we may not find a way to Him.

The Saviour's actings on earth are frequently symbolical. They present as with a beautiful picture of what He *would* be to His people after

He had left the world. Doubtless the Holy Spirit designed that every action of our Lord on earth should be a reflex picture of what He would be to His people throughout all time. Some of these actings are so true in this respect as to arrest our attention. They are so like God's dealings with His people at the present hour, that it would almost appear as if they were designed to represent these alone; while at the same time they are so natural, so simple, that they appear to be only the history of the actor and the hour in which He lived.

The passage we have selected for consideration confirms these remarks. It is a picture of what the Lord has been doing ever since He was on our earth. It is so correctly drawn as to arrest our attention, and make us wonder and adore. May God teach us by His Spirit, and enable us to understand its spiritual meaning. Above all, may we not be readers of His truth but doers also.

We are all familiar with the beautiful and touching narrative of the storm on the lake, recorded in the sixth chapter of St. Mark's Gospel. While the little boat, with its precious charge, was tossed about on the dark waters, the Lord was on the mountain-top praying for them. We are accustomed to regard that boatful of disciples, driven to and fro on the stormy deep, as an emblem of *the Church* in this world, tossed from wave to

wave by the tempests of persecution, sorrow, and sin; and the Lord on that mountain-top as a picture of the Lord's intercession on heaven's mountain-height for His storm-tossed, trembling people.

The passage under consideration presents a similar picture. "He goeth up into a mountain." The Lord has gone up to heaven's mountain-height. And what has He been doing there for the last eighteen hundred years? A great and glorious work, even that which He is represented as doing on this mountain-height of Capernaum—"calling unto Him whom He would." He has been sending message after message to a dying world and a sorrowing Church, calling them unto Him. The Spirit of God has borne these messages from one to another in ten thousand different ways. From heaven's mountain-top the voice of the Lord has been uttered time after time, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters;" "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth;" "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Every sinner brought nigh to Jesus bears witness to that call. Every wanderer restored to the fold attests the mighty power of that voice. Every blessing enjoyed by the believer on earth owes its origin to the Lord's grace, and bears witness to His all-prevailing intercession on the mountain-height in glory. But for His presence there, the Church would long

ago have been overwhelmed by the water-floods. But for that intercession, the world—little as it thinks of it—would be in intolerable torment or crushed to an atom. What upholds the one and spares the other? Only the presence of Jesus at the right hand of the Father. Let us not think of the death, the resurrection, and the ascension of Christ so as to push out of view the Saviour's intercession. What would they all be without it? What would have been the value of the blood to the Israelite of old, had it not been presented by the high-priest upon the altar within the most holy place? The conscience of the worshipper would have remained unpurged and the blood of the lamb been valueless. Oh how inestimably precious to us then the intercession of the Lord Jesus!

But mark the first important truth brought before us, "He calleth unto *Him*." This is solemn and instructive. The Lord Jesus need not have called the disciples first to Him. He might have sent them forth on their mission of salvation without this. He might just simply have said, "Go forth, and make known the gospel, and draw sinners unto me." But He did not. There was a more important work to be done first—a *preparatory* work. They must first of all be called "unto Him." They must have close personal dealing with Him. They must come into His presence, *look Him in the face*, and hear His voice speaking

to their inmost souls with living power. They must go forth from that presence to their solemn work. Without this preparatory work they would have run in vain, they would have laboured in vain. Without this work He would not send them. Without this they would have gone forth to meet with only failure and defeat. Without this their mission would have been fruitless, immortal souls would have been lost, Christ's name would have been sullied with dishonour, and a dying world would have perished in its sins. "He calleth unto Him." Here lay the secret of their strength, the explanation of their victory. Here is the solution of the question, "How is it that Christianity has made itself such a name in the world?" Here is the answer to the question "Will it ultimately triumph?" Yes! it will triumph. It began in the presence of Jesus. It went forth from the presence of Jesus. And whatever work begins and goes forth from His presence, *must* have "victory" inscribed on its banner. It *will* triumph, for the strength of the Omnipotent accompanies it.

"He calleth unto *Him*." Not first to the Church, but to Himself. Not first to the waters of baptism, but to Jesus. Not first to ordinances or ceremonies, denominations or opinions, but to a crucified and living Saviour. Oh that ambassadors of religion would bear this in mind in

their ministrations in the pulpit and out of it ! Jesus *first*—Jesus only. All the others are good *only* when *He* is first. All else subservient to His glory. All else deriving their lustre from His dear name alone.

“He calleth unto *Him*.” What Jesus did Himself, surely we may do. Surely Christ is our example. Did He call men *first* to Him ? Then, minister of Christ, do you follow His blessed example. Begin it with your next Sunday’s sermon, and carry it on through life. *First* to Jesus. Then will everything else be beautiful, seen in His precious, holy light.

“He calleth unto *Him*.” Why *first* to *Him* ? Who can do for us what He can ? Who can give us strength for our work as He can ? What can leave such an influence upon ourselves and upon our message as the presence of Jesus ? What can give such living power to the heart, the life, and the lips, as communion with Him ? To look God in the face, and go forth to our work from that presence ; oh, is not one hour of it of more value than hours of study and preparation, valuable though they may be ?

“He calleth unto *Him*.” Yes, the Saviour knew all this. He knew the soul wanted this. He knows it wants it still. Therefore He called them “unto *Him*,” because He could give them what nothing *else* could give,—*power* for their work, *blessing* on

their labours, *victory* in their conflicts, *triumph* in defeat. Oh may our *first* call ever be "to *Him*:" our life, our labour, our beginning, our ending, ever be "*Him*!"

"He calleth unto Him whom He would." Mark it well, reader, "whom He would." It is altogether a work of sovereign grace. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." It is "not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God who giveth the victory." If you have come to Jesus, it is because *He* and not *you* have willed it. If your will is towards Him, it is solely because He has drawn it. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." Your song must always be of grace. Your crown must ever be laid at His feet. You have nothing to boast of, nothing to glory in, nothing to distinguish you from the vilest around you. It may *seem* to have been your own will, your own act, which first led you to Jesus, but there was *behind* a moving, directing, overruling power which you saw not, and but for which you would have been at this moment a slave of sin and death.

"Whom He would." Yes, dear Saviour, the work is all Thine, and Thine be all the praise and glory throughout eternity! Every crown shall be placed on Thy brow! Every song be vocal with Thy praise! Every chord of the golden harps on high shall be strung to the riches of Thy grace!

Each shall utter throughout the countless ages of eternity, "Worthy the Lamb." Christian reader, this is the "new song" of heaven. Oh learn the measure of it now! Learn it well. Within the city of the pearl-bright portal and jasper walls on high no other note is heard. Let no other be heard now from thy lips. Let it be always—"Jesus only."

"And they came unto Him." Here is the evidence of our calling and election. We come because He calls. Let us not trouble ourselves with the doctrine of election. Let each one ask himself the question, "Have I come to Jesus?" If you have, reader, then Christ has *called* you, and you have *heard* that call. You are one of the elect, for you have come to Jesus. To ask the question, "Am I one of the elect?" *first* ask another, "Have I come to Jesus?" But if there are two questions in the matter of salvation, such is the perversity of the human heart, that men are certain to ask the *wrong* one first. "Am I one of the elect?" is *not* the first question, reader. "Have I come?" ask that first. Your answer to *this* question will be the answer—the only answer—to the other. Oh, *have* you come to Jesus? *Have* you heard His call? *Are* you at His feet?

"And they came *unto* Him." All who hear His voice go "to Him." "My sheep hear my voice; *I know them*, and they follow me." Take care,

dear reader, you make no mistake here. Take care it is "to Him" you go. There are many voices all around you. One calls to "baptism." Another calls to the "Church." Another calls to the "Sacrament." *God's* call is to come first to Jesus. This is the voice of the Good Shepherd. Not that I would undervalue the others. Oh no. They are all ordinances of God. *But Jesus first*—"Jesus only." O reader! in the midst of the many strange voices on every side of you, see that you hear *God's* voice calling you to Jesus.

"And He ordained twelve that they should be *with Him*." Mark the important word here—"with Him." "He called them *unto Him*." For what purpose? That they should be "*with Him*." Christianity is not an isolated fact, accomplished eighteen hundred years ago on mount Calvary, and ending there. No. It is a germinating seed, a living principle, the first step only to a great end, and that end, *walking* with God. It did not *end* with saving the soul; it only *began* there. How often do we hear it spoken of as if its only design were to make us happy and to take us to heaven. True this is its design, but much more than this. We were redeemed that we should walk with God. We were chosen in Christ that we should be His travelling companions through this wilderness. We were bought with His blood that we should be "*with Him*," that we should never leave His side.

that we should have Him nearer to us than any earthly friend, however near or dear. We were redeemed that we should be so near as to hear His whispers and speak to Him heart to heart. This was the end for which He chose the twelve; this is the end for which God chose us, for which He chooses any man. Ah, many Christians seem to know Jesus very little! He is rather an abstraction than a living Person. He is known at best in some of the prominent displays of His grace, such as in His death and resurrection and ascension, in His miracles of healing. These are but the *outer court* of Christianity. We cannot know Jesus thus. We know much of principles, of doctrines, of creeds, of the landmarks of Divine truth; but what do we know of a living Person, what of a beating heart, what of a tender bosom, what of a constantly realised companion, what of abiding nearness to One whose eye of love is never off us, whose heart of love is ever open to us, and out of the fulness of whose grace we are hourly drawing and feeling satisfied? This, only this, is to know Jesus. Why do we remain in the outer court? Why so little thirsting to be within the veil? Why are so many satisfied with having been "called *unto* Him," and care so little about being "*with* Him?" Ah! most of God's people now are walking *at a distance*. They have forgotten *why* the Saviour *called them*—"that they should be *with* Him."

Dear Christian reader, this is the only tenure on which you hold the great blessings of redemption through Christ. You have no right to one of them, except on this condition—that you walk “with God.” Oh, remember it, and live not *on* at a distance from Him. *Know* your Saviour by living very near to Him, having close and constant dealing with Him. Know Him, not as an abstraction, the embodiment of everything holy and everything good; know Him as a living person, a constant companion, an abiding friend, a *very present* help. Only thus can any one *know* Him. Christian, be it yours to know Him thus. Live very near. Deal very closely. Drink deeply from that well of living waters. Strike your tent at its very side. Then how unspeakably precious will He be to you! Oh! *what* a Friend will you have found!

But how can we be *always* “with Him?” Are we to be always “looking unto Jesus?” Can we always “pray *without ceasing*?” Surely not. The passage does not mean this. The disciples were not always “with Him.” Jesus was in one town and they were often in another, He often in one house and they in another. In this sense they could not be always “with Him,” nor was this needful. Always “with Him,” always “looking,” always “praying,” refers not to the fixed attention, the ordered words. It is the disposition of the soul, the bent of the heart, the native element of

the believer. He is to be like the bird—not always flying, but *ready* to fly. He may be engaged earnestly in life's daily duties, he may have the weight of life's daily cares, and yet there may be such a *disposition* of soul towards the Saviour that he may always be said to be looking, praying, living "with Him." This is what the passage implies. This is what God demands. This is the disposition we should carry about us everywhere, from the moment we wake in the morning till our eyelids relapse into slumber. This is what it is to be "with Him" in the passage under consideration. This disposition of soul can only be had by being very much in the presence of God. It is not knowledge that can give it us, not even scriptural knowledge. It can only be had by being alone with Him. We contract the disposition and habit and manner of some people wonderfully. There are some cases where association begets assimilation so rapidly that we seem to gaze upon another being altogether from that which we formerly knew. Dear Christian reader, it is the same with Jesus. Be much alone with Him. In no other way can you obtain the *disposition* of soul that will make you to be always "with Him," and thus become *like* Him. God grant that you may know Jesus thus!

Let us now mark the next point in this beautiful passage. "And that He might send them

forth to preach." Mark, reader, the three beautiful links in this divine chain—"unto Him," "*with Him*," "*from Him*." God will only use His own instrumentality. If we are to be "sent forth" to do His work we must be called "unto Him," we must be living "*with Him*." Why is there so much *speaking* for God and so little result? Because we are not "*with Him*," and He cannot send us. Why is there so much machinery at work in God's service, so much revival work, so much instrumentality of every varied kind with which no previous age can bear comparison, and yet so little blessing? Why so many complaints of ministers and others that so little fruit is borne? Ah! it is because we are not "*with Jesus*," and He cannot send us forth. True, God may use a worldly-minded minister, or an unconverted minister, just as He used Balaam, or even as He used Judas. But these are the *rare* exceptions, not the rule. They are the meteors in the dark sky, dazzling by their brilliance, and by that brilliance showing the absence of all *substance*. They are *beacons*, not *examples*. If, reader, you want to be used *for* God, you must live *with* God. Depend upon it He will not use you without. And if, on a calm retrospect of your labours, you find He has not used you, depend upon it this, and only this, is the secret, the *real* cause. Though you may try to persuade yourself it is to be attributed to other

causes, to the nature of your parish or the character of your people, it is *here*. If you are living "with" Jesus He will surely send you forth. And being "sent forth," it *is* to do His work, and that work will sooner or later be *seen*.

And what is another result of being "*with Him?*" We see it in the passage itself. "And to have *power* to heal sicknesses and to cast out devils." In His presence we get just what we all need for our work—"power." It is not carnal power, not the power of knowledge, of eloquence, of learning. No. It is the power of the Spirit of God. We are weak and helpless. Who so weak as we? Foes without, and fears within. Who so weak as we? An evil heart, a feeble body, an unpalatable message? Who so weak as we? A feather in the hurricane, a straw in the tempest. What do we need? Power. Who can give it us? Jesus. Where alone can it be had? In His presence. And what power *that* is! It is "mighty through God," even "to the pulling down of strongholds." Yes, it is the power to "heal sicknesses and cast out devils." But has the child of God this power? Is not the age of miracles past? No. The age of miracles is here still. The child of God has this power, even now. What said our Lord? "Greater works than *these* shall ye do, because I go to the Father." Yes, even the weak and feeble Bible-woman, or the unlearned *Scripture-reader*, may be seen going to the bedside

of some poor failing tabernacle, and so speaking of Jesus and His salvation as to lift the sufferer above every pain and every sickness in the joy of sin forgiven and peace with God through His precious blood. And is not this a healing greater than the healing of any bodily disease? Yes, the trembling servant of Christ, going forth to her work from His presence, can so speak the "word in season" as to cast out the devil ready to leap forth from some heart in the shape of foul language or brutal assault. Oh, is not this a casting out of devils as truly as anything ever yet seen by the world? Is not this a mightier power, a grander work, than all the miracles earth has ever known? And this shall be the "power" of all those who go forth to their work from the presence of Jesus. O ambassador of a living Saviour, think of this! Be "*with* Him," and then He *will* "send you forth." Be "*with* Him," and then fear not how feeble your body is, how weak your efforts, how poor your utterance. "Power" will be yours in spite of them all, for *God* will send you forth. "Power" will be yours, while feebleness will be stamped upon all else that *man* calls power. Yours will, with all your weakness, shine forth in direct contrast, because the "*treasure*" is in the "earthen vessel." The excellency of that power will not be of *you*, it will be of *God*. O minister of Christ! if you rise from your breakfast table to pay some sick visit in

your parish without first going into God's presence, no wonder you are unblessed! If you go forth from your study to your sermon or your lecture without spending a *large portion* of your time in *secret* prayer, no wonder you are not blessed! If you go forth among your people from your house without first having looked God in the face, and taken away with you the bright shining of His countenance, no wonder you are unblessed! There is no mark of heaven upon you. God *cannot*, God *will not* use you. Think of this then, and change your entire plan. Try *this* for once, if you have never tried it before; and, depend upon it, God will bless you.

One point more in this passage, and I close. "And Simon He surnamed Peter." When we give a name to anything, we claim that thing as our own. The lord gave a new name to Simon. He thus declared him to be His own property. It was a new name, the name given him by Jesus. It is thus the Lord calls His people by a new name, and declares them to be His by so doing. We are no longer our own, but His. We are to go through the world with the name He has put upon us, and henceforth to be known only by that. Reader, have you Christ's new name? Are you really His? Does the world know you as a disciple of the Lord Jesus? Oh, take not that holy name in vain! If you are called a Christian, *be* one. Be not a luke-

warm, half-hearted one, under such a holy name as that you bear. Far rather fling away your profession altogether. No misery like that of being half Christian, half worldling. Nothing so unsavoury as salt that has lost its savour. God sends His own judgment on the secret heart of such a soul. There is no joy, no peace, no light of God's countenance. All is dreariness within. All is "a fearful looking forward to." All is a dismal blank between that soul and God. It stands on the brink of a precipice. A terrible stroke must come from God's hand ere it can be brought back. A bleeding heart, a reddened eye, a mountain weight, making every fibre of the frame quiver, and the whole body, soul, and spirit, stoop under the crushing blow. Reader, to know the joy, the peace, the hopes, and blessings of Christianity, you must *be* a Christian *out and out*. You can never know them without. Oh, bear the new name, and let the world see it on you! Live near to God—very near. See that this threefold link be the mark of your life. See that Jesus has called you, and that you have gone to Him. Make no mistake here; it is fatal. See that, having gone to Him, you are "with Him." See that, being "with Him," you ever go forth into the world "from Him." Then God will bless you, and make you a blessing.

THE LIFE CALL.

All along the valley,
Where dark waters flow,
I walk with One who loves me,
And who will not let me go.

All along the valley,
I hear His accents mild,
And, though the way be rugged,
He guides His weary child.

All along the valley,
As I walk with Him I love,
The mist of sorrow rises,
And dies in light above.

All along the valley,
Where the flow'rets are most sweet,
Their colours brighten and deepen
Beneath His blessed feet.

All along the valley,
I can whisper in His ear
The glad Psalm of the Ransomed,
Which the angels stoop to hear.

All along the valley,
Where suff'ers moan in pain,
I can speak that Name of healing,
And hope returns again.

All along the valley,
Though dark the waters be,
I can catch the glowing sunlight,
Tow'rds which He walks with me.

Then, no longer in the valley,
But up the golden street,
I shall walk with One who loves me,
Where the crystal waters meet.

II.

THE CHERUBIM.

EXODUS xxv. 17-22.

ONE of the most instructive and beautiful symbols of God's Word is the cherubim. Taken in connection with the ark and the mercy-seat, both of which are intended by the Spirit of God to represent the Lord Jesus Christ, they bring before us the glory of the Church. They are the representatives of the Church of God in its glorified state. They bid us look at them, and see, through them, what we ourselves shall shortly be. They are calculated to draw our hearts upward, and make us long for that time when "we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." It is a "blessed hope," a glorious prospect! May the Lord the Spirit direct our minds and hearts to understand this precious portion of His Word!

We are told, in the first place, the material of which these cherubim were made. "*As many as were willing-hearted brought bracelets and ear-rings*

and tablets, all jewels of gold ; and every man that offered, offered an offering of gold unto the Lord." Of this gold the cherubim were made. "Of *beaten* work shalt thou make them" (ver. 18). There was thus a threefold work in the preparation of these glorious bodies. The gold was first cast into the furnace. All the pieces, which had previously formed separate and distinct parts, were thus melted into *one* piece. How beautifully does this present us with the oneness of God's people ! No longer are they isolations, widely apart, having no connection one with another. They are, by the furnace of the cross, into which the Saviour was cast, melted into one glorious piece. They become united to Him and to each other. There they become one lump in Christ. They are members one of another. The cross binds them together with indissoluble ties. "If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it ; or one member rejoice, all the members rejoice with it."

Not only so, but the fire purified the gold of the cherubim from its dross. Thus does the Church become purified by the work of Christ on the cross. In that furnace she is baptized. "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." There she is purified from all her uncleanness. There she is washed whiter than snow. From that fountain she steps up to the throne, "all glorious within." She has not spot or wrinkle.

She leaves the dross behind, and is "complete in Him." But not only does the Church become *one* in Christ, not only *purified*, but also "beaten." "Of beaten work shalt thou make them." Stroke after stroke was to fall upon this melted and purified gold. Thus was the fine gold to be shaped and moulded, so as to become meet for the glory within the veil. Nor were these strokes random ones. Each one came from the hand of a Bezaleel, a wise-hearted man, filled with unerring judgment and Divine wisdom. Every stroke was a moulding and fashioning the fine gold, giving it the expression and figure and lineament of countenance, the grace and plumage, which was to appear within the veil.

So it is now with God's people, of whom these cherubim were the symbol. Stroke after stroke of sorrow and trial falls upon them in this world. Wave after wave rolls over them, so that they exclaim in bitterness of heart, "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts: all Thy waves and Thy billows have gone over me." Yet there is no accident, no mistake, no random stroke. Each one comes from a wise-hearted One—One full of wisdom, and yet full of love. Each one is part of a great and glorious process. It is giving grace and fashion and shape to the soul, and preparing it to shine in glory within the veil. It is moulding and fashioning the blood-bought one, so that, *like the cherubim* within the veil, he may bear the

cloud of Divine glory that shall rest upon him in the morning of resurrection and throughout the countless ages of eternity.

Another truth brought before us in this symbol is the oneness of Christ and His people. "Even of the *mercy-seat* shall ye make the cherubim" (ver. 19). The *mercy-seat* and the cherubim were thus made out of the same mass of gold. So Christ and His people are one. They are "partakers of the Divine nature." The same strokes fell upon Him as fall upon them. They pass through the same furnace. The same path of tribulation to them as to Him. One process prepares them both for the same glory.

But how sweetly does this remind us of the Saviour's sympathy! As the cherubim were made out of the same piece of gold as the *mercy-seat*; every stroke on the one vibrated through the other. Thus the Lord Jesus is touched with a feeling of our infirmities. Do the strokes of the hammer fall on the Lord's weak ones at Damascus? Immediately a voice is heard from heaven, "Why persecutest thou *me*?" "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto *me*." "I know their sorrows." "I have seen, I have seen, the afflictions of my people." Oh, how does the oneness of the cherubim and the *mercy-seat*, in being formed out of the same piece of gold, reflect this precious truth!

We next learn the position of these cherubim. "And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end : even of the mercy-seat shall ye make the cherubim on the two ends thereof." They were to stand on the ends of the mercy-seat, and thus teach us that the Church has her foundation in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the true mercy-seat, and on Him she is built. "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, Christ Jesus."

Not only do we see the true resting-place of the Church, but as these cherubim stood at each end of the mercy-seat, and looked down upon it, they gazed upon the whole length and breadth of it. The eye dwelt on the full range of blessings which that mercy-seat contained. So is it with the Church. As she stands on that solid foundation, she feels that every blessing is hers. The height and depth, the length and breadth of that love which passeth knowledge is underneath her. She is "blessed with *all* spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." There is not one spiritual blessing which is not hers. Standing on that glorious rock, she exclaims with the Apostle, "All things" are mine. "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come ; *all are yours* ; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

"And the cherubim shall stretch forth their

wings on high, covering the mercy-seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy-seat shall the faces of the cherubim be." The outstretched wings over the mercy-seat thus formed a kind of chariot, on which the cloud of glory, the vehicle and symbol of God's presence, rested,—as we find it in the twenty-second verse, "There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee *from above* the mercy-seat." One striking truth, however, is presented in the words, "Their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy-seat shall the face of the cherubim be." We are thus taught that the mercy-seat is the great object of adoring wonder and praise; and that, though their gaze is fixed upon it, it does not hinder them from looking on each other. So will it be in resurrection glory. Christ shall be the great theme of adoration and praise throughout eternity. We shall gaze with rapture upon His matchless beauty, and yet behold each other with delight and joy. We shall behold His glory beaming from the countenances of those we love. "In His light we shall see light." The joys and friendships of this world shall be renewed in His presence without their sins and sorrows, their shadows and clouds, their infirmities and failings. Even now we "look one to another," just in proportion as we look to the true mercy-seat, Christ Jesus. We "look one toward another,"

and recognise His image. We love as brethren. We have one Father and God, one glorious home on high, one eternal bond that has bound us for ever. The more we turn our "*face toward the mercy-seat,*" the more will our "*faces look one to another.*"

We see this truth confirmed by a similar view of the seraphim, in the sixth of Isaiah. There the redeemed in glory are again symbolised by these glorious beings. As they gaze upon the Lord Jesus, sitting on His throne of glory, we are told "*one cried unto another, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.*" Yes, even now, where Jesus is the subject, though we may differ widely in other matters, we still "*cry one to another.*" Our praise is one. Our joy is one. Our hearts' resting-place is one. There is no discordant note. The same cry goes forth from the lips of one as from another, "*Holy, holy, holy,*" "*Worthy is the Lamb.*"

But again. The mercy-seat and the cherubim were to be *for ever* united. How forcibly we are reminded of the beautiful words of our Lord, "*Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me be with me where I am,* that they may behold my glory." Yes, precious Saviour, sin-defiled, and ruined, and helpless though we are, Thou canst not do without us! That home would be no home to Thee, were Thy blood-bought ones *not with Thee.* Oh wondrous love! Oh deepest

mystery! And that time is at hand. We shall soon be "for ever with the Lord." The cherubim and the mercy-seat shall be *manifested as one*, never to be seen apart. Lord, hasten that glorious consummation! Thy people sigh and cry for Thy return! Creation groans and travails! Oh, come quickly, Lord, and take the kingdom for Thine own!

"There will I commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony." "The testimony of two men is true." They are faithful witnesses, and these two cherubim were witnesses to the mercy-seat. They show us that the redeemed in glory will be witnesses throughout eternity to God's faithfulness and love and mercy. As they gaze upon the abyss, from which they have been rescued, they will sing a louder song, and strike a sweeter chord on their golden harps. They will bear witness to His grace that rescued them, His love that followed them through life, His faithfulness in preserving them hour after hour. Oh, how will those notes of praise resound through the courts of glory! How loud will be the song to the riches of God's grace!

One more truth taught by the cherubim, and I close. They were carried forward by the Levites through the wilderness, under the guidance of the cloudy pillar. The holy furniture, when it was thus carried forward, had two coverings. The

inner one was the beautiful veil. Its outer was the covering of badger-skins. The inner, or hidden one, was of beautiful workmanship. The outer, and visible one, was the rough and unsightly covering of the badger-skin. How beautifully did that tabernacle, in its passage through the wilderness, foreshadow the Man of sorrows in His journey through this world! The outward eye fell on Him, and exclaimed, "He hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him." "Outwardly He was as the tabernacle, covered with the badger-skins. Those who would see the beauty and glory, must go *within* the tabernacle, must look at Jesus with the eye of faith. They must be led to Him by the Spirit of God. They must leave the world outside, and gaze upon the riches of His grace within the veil. Without, there is the Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Within, there is the beauty and glory of the Son of God—the peace, the joy, the gladness of heart, the royal robes, and the kingly crown, which they shall wear who tread the courts of the Lord's tabernacle, as it passes through the wilderness. O reader! have you gone within? or are you only gazing upon Christ at a distance? Have you gone within? Have you seen His beauty and glory? Is Christ precious to your heart? What is Jesus to you now? O sinner!

enter within, and see for thyself what a glorious Saviour Jesus is ! O Christian ! *enter within, live within !* Press nearer and nearer to God. If for a moment thy sinful heart lead thee out, oh stay not there ! Get back as quickly as possible. Get back again through the sprinkled blood. Get back from the world's hollow laughter, from the world's false glare and glitter, from the poisonous atmosphere that broods over it. Get back within the veil as quickly as thou canst, and when the Lord shall come may He find thee there, hidden in the clefts of the Rock of ages. May this be thy portion now, and then, for Jesus Christ's sake !

Lord, the waves are breaking o'er me and around,
Oft of coming tempest I hear the moaning sound :
Here there is no safety, rocks on either hand ;
'Tis a foreign roadstead, a strange and hostile land.
Wherefore should I linger ? others gone before
Long since safe are landed, on a calm and friendly shore.
Now the sailing orders, in mercy, Lord, bestow,
Loose the cable, let me go !

Lord, the night is closing round my feeble barque ;
How shall I encounter its watches, long and dark ?
Sadly worn and shattered by many a billow past,
Can I stand another rude and stormy blast ?
Ah ! the promised haven I never may attain,
Sinking and forgotten amid the lonely main.
Enemies around me, gloomy depths below,
Loose the cable, let me go !

Lord, I would be near Thee, with Thee where Thou art,
Thine own word hath said it, "'tis better to depart ;"
There to serve Thee better, there to love Thee more,
With Thy ransomed people to worship and adore.
Ever to Thy presence Thou dost call Thine own ;
Why am I remaining, helpless and alone ?
Oh ! to see Thy glory, Thy wondrous love to know !
Loose the cable, let me go !

Lord, the lights are gleaming from the distant shore
Where no billows threaten, where no tempests roar ;
Long belovèd voices calling me I hear,
Oh ! how sweet their summons falls upon my ear !
Here are foes and strangers, faithless hearts, and cold,
There is fond affection, fondly proved of old.
Let me haste to join them : may it not be so ?
Loose the cable, let me go !

Hark, the solemn answer ! hark, the promise sure,
"Blessed are the servants who to the end endure !"
Yet a little longer, hope and tarry on ;
Yet a little longer, weak and weary one !
More to perfect patience, to grow in faith and love ;
More *my* strength, and wisdom, and faithfulness to prove :
Then the sailing orders the Captain shall bestow,
Loose the cable, let thee go !

III.

THE GUEST CHAMBER.

LUKE xxii. 1-14.

JERUSALEM, with all its religious festivals and ordinances, was externally what it had ever been. Year by year these festivals came round and found the people in the same beaten path, strictly attentive to the outward act, and scrupulously so in a superincumbent mass of details nowhere prescribed in God's law. It has ever been the case, that a religion decaying in vitality has increased its external rites as well as its scrupulosity in attending to them. It would seem as if conscience were accusing the inner heart, on account of its decline, and that in order to silence its reproofs, it would make up for internal vitality by external ceremonies. It is in this way that a form of godliness is so deceptive. It looks all the more beautiful for the absence of life, just as the polished marble, which takes in not one ray of the sun's warmth, reflects its beams all the more brightly. The corpse looks often much more beautiful, than previous to

the departure of the spirit from its tabernacle. So it is often with religion, in its external form.

So it was with Jerusalem here. Its religion was not only a decaying thing, it had decayed. The life—the true life of God—had gone out of it. It was the body without the soul. How do we prove this? The opening words of this chapter show us—“And the chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill Him.” Jesus was—Jesus is—the life of all true religion. They would not have Him. They sought to *kill* Him.

And yet He *must* be killed. The feast of the passover drew nigh. At that feast God's own word had declared that the people should “take to them every man a lamb;” that it should be “slain between the two evenings;” that its blood should be “sprinkled on the doorposts and the lintel” of the houses wherein they dwelt; that they should “eat the flesh” of the slain lamb in the houses where they dwelt. (See Exodus xii.). The day and the hour came round. Where was the lamb? Where the blood? Where the flesh to eat? Jesus must needs be slain. He was the Lamb; His the blood; His the flesh to eat. God was providing the lamb while these chief priests and scribes were the blind instruments. They were planning, plotting, working hard, while God was overruling. Every step of theirs was carrying out His end while blindly *imagining they were carrying out only their own.*

But *who* was to betray the Saviour?—A disciple. Where was He to be betrayed?—In the Church. Yes; it has ever been that the Lord has been betrayed by His Church. Had it been *true* to Him, how His cause would have triumphed! But He and His cause have been betrayed in the Church. There the betrayer has arisen. There the cause has suffered.

Satan is first in the scene here. Is he not first in every scene? He is the ruling spirit at all times in the *world*, but he never appears in his true character as when he enters the *Church*, or when he is displayed in a *disciple*. The betrayal of the Lord Jesus came not from the *world*: it came from a *disciple*. What a humbling thought! Therefore we are told that in him specially the devil was seen. The very contrast of discipleship only made this the plainer. The *disciple* can do what the *world* cannot—betray the Master! The disciple has means and ways to carry out this end that the world has never thought of. Surely, Satan is conspicuous there in a way that he is not among even the “chief priests and captains!”

Yes; the devil is the actor, the disciple the instrument; and thus, as is always the case, the Saviour *suffers* and *dies*. But we are told something of this disciple in words sufficiently ominous at the very outset: “Then entered Satan into Judas, surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of
 9

the twelve." It is as if the Spirit of God would say, "He had no other part with the Lord's people than being of *the number*." The *numerical* part was the only connection between him and the Saviour, or between him and the Lord's people.

Satan is never at rest. Where he enters it is to work, to be active. Therefore it is said that when he entered into Judas "he went his way." It is called "*his way*." How so, if he were the blind instrument of another? Because he, in the first place, *yielded himself*; and "to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey." Our yielding makes us responsible for every act of the one to whom we yield ourselves. Therefore the way Judas took is not said to be Satan's way, but "*his own*."

Whenever the disciple leaves the presence of Jesus to make the world "*glad*," Christ must suffer in His *cause* as well as in the *heart* of that disciple. We cannot leave the presence of Jesus to go into the world, without making it richer and ourselves poorer; without making it glad and ourselves sorrowful. Nor can we go back to the presence of the Saviour from the world without carrying the spirit of the world along with us. Judas made the enemies of the Lord "*glad*." He came back to the presence of Jesus, bringing in his heart what he had not when he left the side of Jesus—a powerful *stimulant to sin* in the reward offered by the world.

What a scene was displayed in that upper room ! What a picture of the world in which we live ! There was one as near to Jesus as saint can ever be, whether in heaven or earth—on His bosom. There was another as far off as man can be, even possessed by the very person of Satan ! In the very presence of the Lord Himself, in the holiest of all assemblies, *there* was a traitor. Oh, may there not be such a traitor in the heart of the holiest ? May we not, in the midst of our holiest things, have a heart that is nourishing a traitor ? Even where the Lord is, there stands Judas.

But now let us turn and look at the preparation for the passover. "Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed. And he sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the passover, that we may eat. And they said unto Him, Where wilt Thou that we prepare ?"

The disciple must not only *do* God's work, but do it *where* He would have it done. If the Master is to feast with us, it must be in the *place* and in the *way* He appoints. We must *follow His bidding, in dependence on His word* ; and He will surely guide us to the right path, the right man, the right house, and the right room. Going forward, as the disciples did here, with his instructions in the *memory* and *heart*, and following these, and these only, we shall surely have the Saviour

to feast with us—"I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with me." "And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in."

Two striking truths are brought before us in the passage just quoted. The first is, How far should a Christian follow the leadings of Providence? In answer to the question, "Where wilt Thou that we prepare?" the Lord Jesus simply directs them to go into the city, and when they were there, they should be directed. They were to see a *man* bearing a pitcher of water. This was an unusual occurrence. To have seen a *woman* bearing the pitcher, would have been an ordinary event. We see here, however, that the first step was obedience to the Lord's word; afterwards they should see the signs He had pointed out. First of all, obedience to the word, and then they should see and might follow the leadings of Providence. Before a Christian can feel himself justified in following the leadings of Providence, he must be in the same place as the disciples were here. They were in the presence of Jesus, listening to His instructions, treasuring them up in memory and heart, and acting implicitly on them. These things comprise nearness to Jesus, looking to Jesus, trusting in Jesus, and obedience to Jesus. This is the state of heart a man must be

in if he would safely follow the leading of Providence. To follow providential leadings without this, we shall follow what we think is the leading of the Lord, but only because it accords with some favourite plan we had chalked out for ourselves. How often are such leadings followed, and we come to find they have been but the following out our own inclinations or likings. We have decided on some course, and anxiously look out for some favourable turn in circumstances to give it sanction. Some coincidence happens, rather strange and unexpected, and this is looked upon as a voice from heaven, as a leading of Providence! We come to find, in after-years, that it was a mistake; and although God makes "all things," even our mistakes, "work together for good to them that love Him," we have to reap the bitter fruits. We followed our own heart's secret wish or liking—perhaps unconsciously—and fondly persuaded ourselves it was the Lord's way made now very plain! Yes, dear Christian reader, such mistakes as these you will always be making, unless you are in the place of the disciples here. If you are *not*, you have no warrant whatever for expecting any such manifestation on your behalf. You *sin* in expecting it. They to whom such plain providential leadings were vouchsafed here when they should enter the city, were men who loved the Saviour, followed Him, were in His very presence, listening

to His word, and going forth through the world with that word hid within them, and with it only as their guide. Is this the case with you, reader? Do you follow Jesus—follow Him through evil report and through good? Do you live in His presence? Are you near to His side, listening to His word, following its instructions in all things? Then indeed you will be safe in expecting the Lord to give you some gracious tokens of the way, in giving you some providential evidence that you are right, that you may go onward in the path. You shall not miss the way then, nor will you be ready to take as the Lord's leading any coincidence because it happens to favour a preconceived plan or some secretly cherished wish. Rest assured that the heart that is not living very near to God is in no fit state to judge of what are leadings of Providence. It will, it must, go wrong. It requires faithfulness of heart, sincerity of purpose, a single eye to God's glory, and a well-balanced mind and judgment to decide on the leadings of Providence; and these things are only to be had by a life spent in God's presence. Say not "This is hard; this is too high a standard." Enoch walked with God under far less light than you have, and with as many cares on his back. What he did, all God's people may do. Sit not still, Christian. Rest not satisfied with present attainments, whatever they *may be*. Higher and higher still! Nearer and

yet nearer to Jesus! Press towards the mark, Press on through the world, the flesh, the devil. Press through sins and failings, through wanderings and weaknesses, through shadows and clouds and darkness. Oh, press on nearer and yet nearer to Jesus!

We are taught another important truth in this verse: that the Lord will make His way plain after our obedience. We often ask, like the disciples here, "Where wilt Thou?" "What course shall I adopt?" "Where shall I go?" "What will be the issue of this?" What is the Lord's answer? "Go into the city." Take the *first* path open before you. Leave the *future*. Follow the Lord; obey implicitly His word. Take the first step before you, though you only see that one. You walk by faith, and therefore one step at a time is quite enough. Take this step. God will make every other plain. When the disciples had gone into the city—then, but not till then, they saw the man with a pitcher, the house, the goodman, and the room. Do you the same; and depend upon it the same result will follow; you will be guided to the right place, and you will find that in following the Lord fully, He has brought you into a guest-chamber, where He will sup with you and you with Him. The joy of the Lord will be yours.

"Follow him into the house where he entereth in." Here we have another important truth brought

before us. When the Lord Jesus seeks a place in our hearts and homes, He does not force us against our wills. He does not ask us to go another way, or to go to another house, or to lay down the pitcher and take up some other duty. No; grace never does this. It says, "Carry your pitcher, go to your house, but *let me go along with you.*" It would only *sanctify* our callings and duties. It would ask for a place in them all. We shall have all the better duties, all the happier homes, all the more joyful guest-chambers, for having Jesus along with us. And there should be no duty, no calling, no home, no guest-chamber, where He cannot be taken, where He cannot be glorified. O reader! remember this, and cling to Jesus! Go nowhere, do nothing, say nothing, unless you can have Him with you. Live for Him, for Him only. Is there anything else worth living for here? Oh, nothing! Live for Him, with Him, in Him! He only, who thus lives, truly lives. Life without Him as the chief moving spring is sleep, slumber, death!

But though there are no compulsions in true religion, though the Lord asks us only for a place in everything, yet where He comes, He comes to reign; where He is admitted, He will only enter as a sovereign. "And ye shall say to the goodman of the house, The *Master* saith unto thee, Where *is the guest chamber*, where I shall eat the passover

with my disciples?" The word is, "the *Master* saith." Into that heart or that home where He is about to take up His abode, He will enter only as "the Master." All within must bend to His will. All must subserve His glory. He, and only He, must sit on the throne there; and every will, every affection, every plan, every duty, must become His subject. Yea, the husband, the wife, every child, every relative, every servant within that house, must come under the influence of His laws. The goodman of that house must know, and know it from the Lord Himself, that in his own house and home there is "a Master," even over him.

But mark another truth taught here from the message of the Lord to this "goodman" and to this "house." "Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover *with my disciples?*" Mark, reader, the inseparable connection between Christ and His disciples. It is not "where *I* shall eat the passover." No. That is never the message of Jesus. It is "where *I* shall eat *with my disciples.*"

Where the Lord Jesus finds a heart and a home, there too must His people find the same hearty welcome. He will not dwell where they cannot find a welcome. Think you, dear reader, that He who said, "I have *heartily* desired to eat this passover with *you*," would have entered that dwelling except on this condition—"with my disciples?"

Listen to His own words, applicable as much to the present time as to the future, "Father, I will that they also whom Thou hast given me *be with me where I am.*" Dear reader, if yours be not a heart or home that can joyfully admit the disciple, there the Master will not dwell. Say not, "He is so peculiar," or, "He holds views so different from mine," or, "He is so opposed to my own particular system that I cannot take him to my heart." Oh narrow-hearted soul! Go and see if thou canst carry that spirit into the presence of God! These are the very things that will prove the character of thy religion. These are the things that will test thy forbearance and patience and love. If thy religion be good for anything, it will stand this test. If it have the stamp of heaven, it will bear all for the *Master's* sake. O reader! ask for this large-heartedness! Ask for this love to the Master that will overleap every barrier. Ask for that large heart and loving spirit that will scorn to let such paltry differences come between thy soul and Jesus. Remember the word of the Lord Jesus to *thee*—"I and my disciples."

Yes, reader, this word is to *thee*. Mark the individuality of it in this passage—"And ye shall say to the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto *thee*, Where is the guest chamber?" Reader, hast *thou* a place in thine heart for the Master? *Is there* a chamber there for Him which He can

make a *guest* chamber? or is thy heart like the inn of Bethlehem, which had room for everything and every one but Jesus? The message comes now to *thee*, as surely as it did of old, "Where is the guest chamber?" Where is it, reader? Is it in thy heart? Is it in thy household? The voice that cried of old, "Adam, *where* art thou?" still cries aloud to each heart, "*Where* is the guest chamber?"

Reader, with eternity before thee, with the awful concerns of a never-dying soul hanging on the issues of this question, I ask thee solemnly before God, "Hast *thou* a place in thine heart for the Master?" Oh! sad case for thee if thou hast not. Turn not away from looking this matter in the face. Say not, "This was a *well-prepared, furnished* room, but *my* heart is not prepared; my heart is not furnished; it is all sinful and vile and wretched." Jesus will enter in if thou art ready and willing to take Him. He will make it fit for Him. He will furnish it for Himself. He Himself is all that is needed to make the chamber "all glorious within." Thou canst not make it ready thyself. Thou canst not furnish it by any amount of effort of thine own. Every such effort is *sin*. Christ is standing at the door. Oh let Him in, and all will then be done. He will then make that chamber a *guest* chamber, a place of joy and gladness, a place of song and victory. Only, sinner, let Him in. Take Him as

thy Saviour. Look at Him as having forgiven all *thine* iniquities, as having pardoned all *thy* sins. Look at the cross and see it all done, and done, sinner, for *thee*. Cease from all *thine own* doings, and accept just as thou art, a poor, bankrupt soul, the *finished* work of Jesus. Take this *finished* salvation, this all-sufficient, ever-loving Saviour, into *thine* heart *now*. Listen to the sounds of redeeming love ringing in *thine* ears from heaven, in answer to the deep-seated inquiry in *thy* soul, "What must I do to be saved?" "It is *finished*!" Nothing to be done *to save thyself*; thou hast been saved *by the doing of another*. Fling *thine own* doings to the winds. Receive, and receive *now*, the doing of another—Jesus. He has *done* the work. He has *saved* *thy* soul. "It is *finished*!" Canst thou not receive it? Oh listen, believe, and rejoice!

Master of a household, head of a family, owner of an establishment with servants under thee, and for whose moral as well as spiritual welfare thou art responsible, "the Master saith unto *thee*, Where is the guest chamber?" Are all the members of *thy* household children of God? Are *thy* children *daily* trained up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?" Are *thy* servants taught that they serve not *thee* but the Lord Christ? Art thou living before them as a witness for Jesus? Is there *something of heaven* about thee and *thy* children

and thy household? Master! master! "*the* Master saith unto *thee*, Where is the guest chamber?" What answer canst thou make to God in these matters? Say not, "I pay them well; I work my servants not too hard; they have plenty of opportunities of attending to these things; I don't meddle with their religion; it is entirely a matter between their own souls and God." Master, say not so! Thou art deceiving thyself. Thou *art* responsible, in no small degree, for the state of their souls. On *thee*, master, will be visited their blood if thou see not to this matter. The ruin of *their* souls will only drag *thee* down deeper into hell if thou dismiss the matter in this way. Hast thou done all thou canst to set *Christ* before them? Hast thou, without forcing or intruding injudiciously, spoken to them about their never-dying souls? Hast thou set "the truth" before them, and set them in the way of the truth, as well as thou art able to do it? Master, thou *art* responsible, and one day thou wilt see it. See that thou "refuse not Him that speaketh!"

Minister of Christ, "*the* Master saith unto *thee*, Where is the guest chamber?" Is there a place in thy heart and home for Jesus? Ah! thou wilt never speak to the hearts of others if Jesus be not living and abiding in thine own heart! Art thou living near to Him, living in the light of His countenance? Does thy spirit *pant* for Him?

Canst thou *bear* to live *outside* of His sweet, solemnising, holy presence? Is Christ carried with thee into the *pulpit*, into the *parish*, into the *cottage*, to the dinner-table and the drawing-room? —Christ in thy heart, Christ on thy lips, Christ in thy *conduct*? Minister, of whatsoever denomination thou art, “the Master saith unto *thee*, Where is the guest chamber?”

O reader! ponder these things, I earnestly beseech thee. Live not *on* without Christ in thy guest chamber! Make room for Him and His, though everything else be shut out! Let not the world or the flesh or the devil make a fool of thee by shutting out thy nearest and dearest Friend. The world shuts Him out: oh, take thou Him in. The world will have none of Him: do thou make Him thy All. It is but for “a little while!” Oh, to meet Him with His brand upon our brow and His right glad welcome in our hearts! “Heir of glory,” may this be “for thee and me!”

I have been alone with Jesus,
My head upon His breast,
For I was so very weary,
I wanted there to rest.
I have been alone with Jesus,
He bade me stay awhile,
And I felt it very precious,
The sunshine of His smile.

For I was weary, weary, and longed to be at rest,
And oh ! it was so peaceful there, while leaning on
His breast.

Shall I tell you what I told Him
While I was waiting there ?
I told Him all my trouble,
I told Him all my care.
I told Him Satan's whisperings
Oft called me into sin ;
And I asked Him if I might not
For ever stay with Him ?
For I was weary, weary, and longed to be at rest,
And oh ! it was so peaceful there, while leaning on
His breast.

Shall I tell you what He told me
While I was waiting there ?
For it took away my trouble,
It took away my care.
He told me how He loved me,
His wayward, erring child,
And I felt so very happy,
For still on me He smiled.
For I was weary, weary, and longed to be at rest,
And oh ! it was so peaceful there, while leaning on
His breast.

Then He told me I was welcome
To stay with Him for aye ;
And He said that He could never
Cast His loving child away.

THE GUEST CHAMBER.

"Hark!" He said, "I am your Saviour,
Firm as a rock I stand,
Come and rest beneath My shadow,
When weary in the land."
Oh! 'tis precious, very precious, to lean on Jesus'
breast,
For when the heart is weary, 'tis the only place of
rest.

F. LONSDALE.

IV.

HOLY COMMUNION.

I CORINTHIANS xi. 23-26.

DISORDER and confusion had arisen in the Church of Corinth. Heresies of various kinds had, even at that early period, crept into it. These heresies had become pre-eminently conspicuous with regard to the Lord's Supper. Some came together simply to satisfy the craving of the carnal appetite, without any reference to the solemn character with which the Saviour Himself, in His dying hour, had invested that ordinance. One was hungry, another was drunken. Shame crimsoned the countenances of all those among them who were the Lord's, and who had His honour at heart.

Much of this, in all probability, arose from ignorance rather than from wilful sin. Still, when disorder, confusion, and every evil work creeps into the Church, what is the Divine remedy? It is to bring Christ into the midst—Christ in His word.

Christ in His example, Christ as we know Him in our own experience. This is the instrumentality by which the Spirit of God would set all things right.

And it is thus the Apostle strives to meet the state of things in the Church of Corinth. He administers reproof, rebuke, warning, exhortation, and then he brings before them the word and example of the Lord Jesus, as taught him by revelation in the first place, and by the Holy Spirit in the second.

With what a solemn announcement does he open the passage under consideration!—"I have received of the Lord Jesus that which also I delivered unto you." Oh that every minister, when he comes before his congregation, could say the same! Oh that every minister, on looking back over his ministerial life, were able to say to his people, "That which I have delivered unto you, I have received from the Lord Jesus!" With what solemnity would the words issuing from the ambassador's lips be invested! What a weight of responsibility would they entail! And yet this is what the messenger of Christ should always be able to say. There is sadly too much of human wisdom, too much of *man* in the message. The Lord cannot bless it. If we have not gone to *God* for what we are about to utter, if we have not received our message from *Himself*, in His own presence, how can God use it?

If it has been the effect of study merely, of critical research, of deep thought, of long and anxious preparation, it *may* be a good sermon, a good lecture or address, but how can God use it to the *heart*? Ah! it may be excellent and beautiful, but it lacks "the one thing needful"—the breath of God—the unction of the Spirit. With all this that makes it acceptable to our evangelical congregations, and draws men in crowds to listen, it has not been "received from the Lord Jesus."

Christian minister, whoever you may be, go to God Himself for your message. Go into His presence, and there plead, strive, pant, for a blessing. Get your heart filled, first of all, with His love, with His message to your own soul, and then the Spirit of God will fill the message from your lips, no matter how feeble may be the utterance. Go with a heart full from His presence, and speak as a dying man to the dying around you. Let your conscience be able to testify to those whom you are about to address, that you "have received *of the Lord*" that which also you are about to deliver unto them. Then you will not have to complain, as so many do, "I have been labouring for years in this parish or over this congregation, and see little or no fruit of my labours. I am discouraged and cast down." Ah, ambassador of Christ, change your plan! Trust less than you have done to your preaching, your research, your study. Get alone



with God. Breathe *that* atmosphere more than you have done. Depend upon it, the secret cause is here, and nowhere else. Not in the people, not in the place, not in any *circumstances* connected with it. It is in your own heart. You have thought much of your study, your research, your own powers, and God has "blown upon" them. "Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste—my *secret presence*, that is not valued *as it ought to be*." Lord of light and love and mercy, ay this message solemnly on the heart of every messenger of Thine, for Thy dear name's sake.

And remember at all times what you are—a "receiver." So said St. Paul. "I have *received* of the Lord." We can receive everything from God, but can give Him nothing. We are but "*vessels* of mercy." A "vessel" will take in anything we put into it, but it can give us nothing. The Christian is the same. Whatever he has from God, it is as a receiver, as a vessel, as a debtor to sovereign grace. We must bear this in mind every step of our way. God will put His treasure only into "*earthen vessels*." As vessels, we must come to Him, hour after hour, to be filled. As vessels, we must be emptied by His Spirit, and laid very low at the feet of Jesus. Then will He fill us. We shall receive from Him that message that will *tell* on the hearts of others. There will *then be less* of the taint of our own evil hearts to

mar its beauty, and deprive that message of its healing power.

But the Apostle continues, "that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread: and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you." What a beautiful and expressive figure is that under which He presents Himself to us in this passage—"bread." Bread is our principal food. We could do without much other food; we cannot do without this. We *must* have it, have it daily, or else we droop and die. So it is with Christ. He is the bread of the soul. We can do without much other spiritual food; we cannot do without Him. We *must* have Him, have Him *daily*—yea, every hour of the day. Without Him, our spiritual life decays and dies. Without Him, death reigns in the soul. Without Him, we are but gathered thorns, brands fit for the burning.

But "bread" is the life of the body. Through what a process it has to pass before it can become *food*, before it can sustain life! It was a corn of wheat cast into the ground to die. It grew up,—the blade, the ear, and the full corn in the ear. It was *cut down, winnowed, ground* into flour, and finally subjected to the *fiery* process of the oven. Then, but not till then, could it be *food* for the body. Oh, beauteous emblem of the Lord Jesus!

He was that corn of wheat. He grew up a tender plant before His Father. He was *cut down* by our sin. He was *bruised* for our iniquities. "The *chastisement* of our peace was upon Him." The *fire* of God's wrath descended upon Him on Calvary, and thus He became the *food* of our souls. It is a *crucified* Saviour that is now our life, our food. And thus it was shown in type with regard to the lamb. "Eat not of it *raw*, nor sodden at all with water, but *roast with fire*" (Exod. xii. 9). It is this bruised and smitten, this suffering, bleeding, dying Jesus that is our life, our food, our strength, our all. The bread is not food before it has been in the *oven*. The lamb could not be food while it was *raw*. So it is not Christ in His *life* or in His *example* that is the soul's salvation. No. It is Christ in His *death*. This is the "*bread*," and only this.

And mark the *time*, too, in which the Saviour gave this bread to His disciples. "The Lord Jesus *the same night in which he was betrayed*." It is surely not without its meaning that this bread was given to His people just at the time when He was betrayed by His disciple, and about to be crucified by His people and by the world. It is now the "night" dispensation. It is now that the world is crucifying the Son of God, despising His grace and mercy, and putting Him to open shame. *But more than this.* We are living in days when

disciples are betraying their Master. We see the Church betraying His cause, playing into the hands of the world, and obtaining its reward at the expense of the Saviour's denial. On every side, in the Church of God, this spirit is entering in. The cross is irksome. The narrow way is too hard. Separation to God is a thing to be heard from the pulpit, but not plainly seen in the heart and life of God's people. Oh the deadening influence of the world! How unconsciously we are dragged down its stream! Where are the unmistakable marks of heaven on God's chosen ones? Where is now to be seen the sneer, the curled lip, the distant attitude towards them which the world once assumed. They are becoming less and less seen. Why? The Church and the world have effected a *compromise*. Oh! it is an evil day. Rationalism, Romanism, Ritualism, and *worldliness*—this last the worst of all—are rolling in upon us like a flood. Oh, speak not of the “good time coming.” It is an evil time, a dark and cloudy day. It is a day of mourning and woe; a day when “the sea and the waves”—the vapid passions of the populace—are beginning to “roar,” and when all things shall be out of course. The “good time coming!” Believe it not, expect it not, till Jesus comes in the clouds of heaven. Then shall be the good time, such as earth has never yet seen. Then shall it be—songs of victory in that day. Then shall it

be—"everlasting joy upon our heads." Never till then.

It was surely significant, then, that at this dark hour He should have taken bread, and given it to His disciples. He seems to say, "Believer, in the hour when I am betrayed, when darkness gathers round, when sin is beginning to roll in like a flood, then feed on me; live near to me; remember me." Oh, surely this is the lesson! Now, more than ever, let us live on Jesus. Now, more than ever, let Him be the food, the life, the peace, the joy of our souls. Now, more than ever, the cry, "None but Jesus." O reader! the darkness is growing darker and darker! Be faithful to Him! Cling to Him as you never have done before! It is but for a "little while;" but oh, that little while will be a solemn, a *trying* one. May God keep you faithful in the midst of it! Only He can.

"And when He had given *thanks*, He brake it." Everything in this narrative is significant. The Lord's supper is emphatically a *feast*. It is a *joyous* commemoration. It is an occasion of thanksgiving; for it speaks only of comfort, peace, and joy to the believer. It tells him that sin has been for ever put away by the death of Christ. Oh, should not this make us "thankful?" It tells him that guilt is gone, wrath gone, condemnation gone—and gone for ever. Oh, surely this is a cause of thankfulness! Poor, needy, faint-hearted sinner, just touch-

ing, with a trembling hand, the hem of the Saviour's garment, go not to this table with a downcast countenance and a heavy heart! Go not with fear and trembling and dread! Go with humility, yet with *joy*. Go with a deep sense of thine unworthiness, but go with a heart filled with thankfulness, and lips full of praise. Go thus. Thy Master right gladly bids thee, and has Himself set thee the example. Then thou wilt receive that supper as He Himself received it; and *could* you receive it *better* than *He* did?

"This do in remembrance of me." Ah! enter yonder dying chamber. Tread softly; for the angel of death is there. A loved mother lies on that couch. Weeping ones gather round; for the brightest treasure of earth is about to pass from their hearts and homes. Tears fall fast and thick from every eye. The death-damps are gathering on the brow. A moment more, a moment of suspense and agony—ah! who has not felt it?—and that spirit shall be with Jesus. See, she stretches out her wasted hand and leaves with those loved ones who bend over her a farewell token, and ere the spirit takes its flight she breathes her last word, "Remember me." The hour has fled. Weeping ones return again to that desolate home. The tear-dimmed eye falls, as if by accident, on that farewell token. Oh, how it is pressed to the heart! Oh, how it is bedewed with

tears! What tongue shall tell its worth? Who shall estimate its costliness? Not men, nor angels. What stamps it with such value? That loving and now glorified one who stands before the throne. Only she.

Reader, a dearer than any earthly mother is about to yield His breath. What mother's love was ever like His? What mother had ever a heart like Him? But ere He steps forward to the scourge and the bloody cross, He stretches forth His hand, and says, Take this "in remembrance of me." Oh, do you indeed love that dear Saviour, and yet refuse to press this loving token to your heart? Do you indeed love Jesus, and yet think so little of His last dying token that you can turn your back on it? Would you treat that dear mother that way? And will you treat Jesus so? Is *His* love nothing to you? *Nothing*, reader, if indeed you can turn your back on this blessed, holy, joyous feast. Oh, think of what it *will* be,—if you love Him not. Listen! "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maran-atha"—accursed when the Lord comes.

"For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till He come." The Lord's death is, in Scripture, continually connected with His coming. "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His *own blood*." What follows? "Behold, He cometh

with clouds." Again, mark our Lord's own address (Luke xxii.) Compare this with the previous chapter. See how He joins the coming and His death together in these two chapters! It is so always. The moment we come to the *cross*, God puts before us the *crown*. The interval is over-leaped. We are chosen, as the Apostle says, "in Him," "to wait for His Son from heaven." The Holy Spirit leads each one to the cross of Jesus; but, from the moment they are brought there, the hope set before them is, not the conversion of the world, not the reformation of mankind, but the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were *chosen* to this. They were *redeemed* to this. They are *kept* for this—"to wait for His Son from heaven."

This is the way in which the Apostle sets it before us in the passage under consideration, "ye do show the Lord's *death* . . . till He come." The Lord's supper is then the great connecting link between these two great events. There are, as it were, two great pillars, one on earth, the other in heaven—the one the Lord's *death*, the other the Lord's *coming*; and this supper is the great chain connecting them, stretching through this dispensation. This shows the *obligation* of the Lord's supper, as well as its blessed character. It shows the perpetuity of the ordinance; and that if we love it not, and partake not of it, we sever the

chain, so far as our own souls are concerned, that binds these two glorious events together. Reader, think of these solemn words.

Yet stay! Be warned! If thou art a lover of the world, and hast never yet felt thy need of Jesus, go not, at thy peril, to this table. It is not for thee, lover of the world! It is not for thee, unpardoned sinner! It is not for thee, careless and unconcerned one! Away with thy plea of baptism if thy *heart* has not been baptized, if thou hast not felt thy need of Jesus! God bids thee not to it! Why shouldst thou call down His wrath upon thy head? But if thou hast indeed felt thyself to be a sinner in His sight, and hast some faint longing after that Saviour—no matter how faint it may be—then indeed baptism is a good thing. No one more welcome than thou art. Come, poor, trembling, hesitating one! Jesus bids thee welcome! Turn not thy back on this precious ordinance! Come and eat that broken bread with *praise*! Drink the cup with *joy*! And listen, as thou dost so, what that ordinance speaks to thee—“All *thy* sin is forgiven; all *thy* transgressions are covered; no condemnation for thy soul: *thou* hast ‘passed from death unto life.’” Reader, listen again to thy dying Saviour’s words; listen, and may they ring ever and anon in thy heart as the festive day dawns upon thee—“This do in remembrance of *me*.” Remember Jesus! Oh wilt thou,

canst thou, forget *Him*? Then ever be found at
His table.

Not worthy, Lord, to gather up the crumbs
With trembling hand that from Thy table fall,
A weary, heavy-laden sinner comes,
To plead Thy promise and obey Thy call.

I am not worthy to be thought Thy child,
Nor sit the last and lowest at Thy board;
Too long a wanderer, and too oft beguiled,—
I only ask one reconciling word.

One word from Thee, my Lord, one smile, one look,
And I could face the cold, rough world again;
And with that treasure in my heart could brook
The wrath of devils and the scorn of men.

And is not mercy Thy prerogative:
Free mercy,—boundless, fathomless, divine?
Me, Lord, the chief of sinners, me forgive!
And Thine the greater glory, only Thine.

I hear Thy voice: Thou bidst me come and rest.
I come, I kneel, I clasp Thy piercèd feet;
Thou bidd'st me take my place,—a welcome guest
Among Thy saints, and of Thy banquet eat.

My praise can only breathe itself in prayer,
My prayer can only lose itself in Thee:
Dwell Thou for ever in my heart, and there,
Lord, let me sup with Thee: sup Thou with me.

V.

*THE SMOKING FURNACE AND THE
BURNING LAMP.*

GENESIS xv.

THE portion of Scripture we have selected for consideration is one of the most comprehensive in God's Word. It is replete with instruction ; and there are underlying principles which, in this evil day, when errors of the worst kind are finding an open door into the Church of God, we should do well to consider. Reader, ask the Lord to enable you to receive its truths in your heart, and to make them fruitful in your life, so that you may not be "a hearer of the word only, but a doer also."

"After these things, the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." The expression "these things" refers us to the previous chapter. Abram was God's faithful servant and witness to His truth in the midst of the ungodliness and spiritual darkness which reigned around.

He had gained a great victory over Chedorlaomer, and was returning from the slaughter when he was met by the king of Sodom. This king proposed to Abram to share the spoil: "Give me the persons, and take the goods to thyself." Abram's noble reply ensured for him a further manifestation of God's presence, and the assurance of the fulness of blessing from Him as his "shield and exceeding great reward." God's servants are called upon to be faithful to Him, to make no compromise with the world, but to live separate. "Touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." We see how remarkably this was fulfilled in Abram's case. He would make no compromise with the wicked king of Sodom. He would not touch anything of his. "And Abram said, I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou shouldest say I have made Abram rich." The lifting up of the *one* hand to heaven in prayer is the heathen custom. The Christian's is lifting up *both* hands. "I will that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy *hands*." Abram had still some of these heathenish customs adhering to him. Light comes gradually.

But mark, dear reader, the simple meaning of

these beautiful words. Abram would not put himself under the influence of the world by being under any obligation to it. Had he accepted the gifts of the king of Sodom he would have been under an obligation, and would consequently have been less independent, less free to act for God. He would have felt fettered. To one not decidedly on the Lord's side, it might have appeared very harmless to take these gifts. "What harm! You need make no further advances to the king of Sodom. There is no sacrifice of principle surely in such a little thing as this." So Saul thought when he brought Agag but spared the oxen. So Gehazi thought when he turned back again to Naaman. How differently from Abram did another child of God act in the Old Testament! "Now Jehoshaphat had riches and honour in abundance, and *joined affinity with Ahab*. And after certain years *he went down to Ahab* to Samaria. And *Ahab killed sheep and oxen for him in abundance*, and for the people that he had with him." Ahab knew how to gain his ends. When once he had succeeded in getting Jehoshaphat to accept the "sheep and oxen in abundance," that end was gained. How *could* Jehoshaphat act independently? He had laid himself, by this act, under an obligation to Ahab. How could he withstand the next artful request—"Wilt thou go *with me* to Ramoth-Gilead?" How could he make any other reply

than, "I am as thou art, and my people as thy people, and we will be with thee in the war?" The world had conquered him. He was no longer God's independent servant, but under the trammels of Ahab. Oh! if Jehoshaphat had only made the noble reply of Abram, "I will not take anything that is thine," what sorrow, what sin, what disgrace he would have saved himself that day! Abram would be independent of the world. He would act and live above it. He knew he was God's servant, and he would act as one. He seems to say, "The Lord, the possessor of heaven and earth, is my God. I have pledged myself to Him. He is my Lord and Master, and Him only will I serve and obey." What noble conduct! This is the course every child of God should take in reference to the world. He should live *above* it. He should be God's uncompromising servant. He should stand out boldly, clearly, unmistakably on the Lord's side. This is the only *noble* course. This is the only course that will bring peace to our souls and ensure the light of God's countenance on our path. Not trying "how to make the most of both worlds." Not making *trifling* advances towards it. No wonder such Christians have clouds and shadows round their hearts. No wonder they enjoy little communion with God. No wonder if they have little assurance of the pardon of their sins or their acceptance in Christ. No misery like

that of being a *half* Christian. God sends His own judgment on that soul, in the inward dissatisfaction, the secret uneasiness of conscience, the want of peace and joy. "The salt that has lost its savour" is the most insipid of all. It is fit only for the dunghill. You look at such people, but you see no clear, distinct marks of heaven upon them. You are unable to tell whether they are converted or not. They look so like the world that you cannot put them "among the children," and yet there are features about them that make you *hope* better things. Oh, sad state to be in! Such people are walking at a *distance* from God—if indeed they are His at all. The world is full of them. We meet them on every side of us. No decision for Christ. No outspoken word for Him in the face of a smiling world. For fear of being thought singular or extreme, they are full of little concessions and compromises. Alas! for them. *They* are the sufferers. They are the most to be pitied. Half-hearted Christians! who could rush forward in the heat of the world's battle-field, and in the face of a thousand bullets plant the flag of victory, and yet *quail* before the sneer, the curled lip, the reserve, the distance of a poor worldling in the drawing-room or at the fireside, or occupying some lofty position in respect of them. Ah, say not "this is an isolated case!" The world is *full of such people*. Christians are *themselves* more

guilty of the crime of unfaithfulness to Christ, than of all other crimes they have ever committed. Who stands out *now* like Abram in the passage before us? Few are they indeed among the many. The great question now is not, "How like Christ can I become, without asceticism or eccentricity?" but, "*How much of the world can I grasp without losing heaven?*" Oh fearful apostasy of the Church! "Come, Lord Jesus," and end this shame and sorrow and sin!

And mark, dear reader, the Lord's promise to faithful conduct. "*Touch* not the unclean thing," is the command. And what is the reward? "And I will receive you, and be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters." Mark how it was fulfilled to Abram. He would not *touch* the unclean thing. And now the Lord appears to him. "After these things, the word of the Lord came unto Abram, saying, Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." Yes, even now God appears to the soul of His child, after every step of faithfulness. God appears to him in the silent but secret approval of conscience; in the secret whisper, "Well done, good and faithful servant;" in the flood of love and light which fills his soul; in the increased enjoyment of communion with God. These are infinitely more, *even now*, than the pressure of that cross, whatever it may be, through which the blessing has been

purchased ; and what shall be the reward in the world to come ! Oh for decision for Christ, for faithfulness to God, at all times, under all circumstances ! Child of God, throw not away the blessings which such faithfulness will bring to thy soul ! Live for the Lord, and see, even on earth, how richly He will reward it !

But what does God say to Abram ? “ Fear not.” Why such a word ? He seemed to be one of the most fearless of men. Had he not shown it by his conduct in going forth in the face of mighty foes to the rescue of Lot ? Yes. But it is after the conflict the danger appears. It is not in the thick of the battle that we can see calmly what we have had to encounter, the forces we have had to contend with. It is in the calm retirement and reflection when the battle is over. When we come to look back and see our weakness and the greatness of the foe, then we begin to tremble. Then we need to look again to our stronghold. We need the armour, not only to “ withstand,” but “ to stand ” when the conflict is over. This armour was *on* when Abram met the king of Sodom ; it was *off* when he met God. “ I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.” What greater reward could He give him than Himself. He seems to say, “ The world and all its treasures are too poor for thee, my child. There is nothing below that is *sufficient* reward for thy faithfulness. I give thee

something greater than them all. I give thee *Myself*. Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." This is the reward God sets before faith. This is the reward God has for those who live to Him. All else is too little for them. Whatever other reward He might give, it would be unworthy of Him. Therefore He gives us *Himself*.

What more could Abram have? What more could God give him? Having Him, he had all things: and therefore the first and the greatest blessing God gave to Israel of old, is the blessing, the first and the greatest, which God gives to His children now, "I am the Lord thy God." It was the first of Israel's laws. It is the first of the Christian's too. Could God give anything higher to the Christian than He gave to Israel—*Himself*? Impossible! There may be greater *light*, but salvation was the same then as now.

But was "God" enough for Abram? "And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt Thou give me, seeing I go childless?" Poor heart of man! How like ourselves to the present hour! There was one little idol on which the heart had set itself—a child; and because he had not this, all God's gifts were as nothing. So long as this remained ungratified, even God Himself was as nothing. How many a child of God is mirrored in this narrative of Abram! God has given Him-

self to us in all the riches of His grace, in all the length and breadth, the heights and depths of His love, in all the promises and sure rewards of His word; and yet because some thorn is not removed from the heart, some longing desire of the soul is not gratified, some object of life is not attained, or some plan on which we had set our hearts has been crossed, all is as nothing. Not even God Himself is sufficient. The idol is there. There is a *substance*, or perhaps only a *shadow*, between the soul and God, and that dims *His* brightness. It *must* be removed. That idol must be thrown down. That shadow must be dispersed.

"The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from Thy throne,
And worship only Thee."

But how does God remove it? By granting the request? Never. He is *God*, and the creature must know it and bow. Man must come to terms with God, not God with man. *His* way is *always* the best, and therefore *He* never bends. God will give the blessing, but not in Abram's *time* or *manner*. He will give it in His own. In the meantime He does not leave us without hope. He gives us His word of promise—His "*sure* word of promise." With that Abram must be satisfied. On that he must lean. So with *all* God's children.

“And behold the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be.”

Let us mark another important truth. “And He said unto him, I am the Lord that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.” God gives Abram the promise to rest upon, and in these words appeals to him for trust in that promise, by reminding him of what He had done for him in times past. It is as if He would say, “Did I not choose thee, and lead thee out of thine own country, Ur of the Chaldees? By my grace to thee in time past, in leading thee out and making thee mine, trust me *now*.” The Lord had brought him out of Ur, for the very purpose that his seed should inherit the land. Abram needed to be under no apprehension, for God would be faithful. So now with us. God has chosen us in Christ, and “blessed us with all spiritual blessings” in Him. Not one good thing of all the Lord our God has promised shall fail. But as with Abram, so with us. It is not God that fails, it is our faith. We cannot wait for God. We want His promises fulfilled in *our* time, instead of His; in *our* way instead of His; according to our

measure, instead of according to His. Our faith is continually failing. We exclaim, in fretfulness of heart, "Lord God, *what* wilt Thou give me?" Perhaps we are tried, like Abram here, in another way. We see at our very side some Eliezer, some one who has not taken up the cross as we have, or done what we have, in the full enjoyment of God's choicest gifts, while we are kept waiting day by day without any token of coming blessing. Oh how trying to flesh and blood is this *waiting*! Well; the Lord will not answer the fretfulness of our hearts. He will not let us have things as we like. He again puts before us just what He put before Abram here, "the sure word of *promise*," and says, "Lean on that. That is enough for the present; wait on me." Not only so, but He meets us further, even as He met Abram. "Remember how I brought you out of Ur of the Chaldees, out of the darkness and bondage of sin and death. See what great things I have done for you in time past. Can you not trust me for all that is to come?" In this way God bids us look back at His love and faithfulness, that we may trust Him for the future. In the same way David takes encouragement: "O my God, my soul is cast down within me; therefore will I remember Thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar" (Psalm xlii. 6). These were *places* where God had shown His power on David's

behalf, and now he is in trouble he looks back, remembers God's goodness, and takes courage for the future. "I shall *yet* praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." Thus God seems to speak to Abram. But alas, Abram's faith is weak! Who would have thought that the one who only a short time before had stood out so boldly for the Lord, would now have shown such marvellous want of faith? Again he replies, "Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" What strange questionings of God's faithfulness! What clouds had gathered round this good man's faith! "Lord God, *what* wilt Thou give me?" "Lord God, *whereby* shall I know that I shall inherit it?" He hardly seems the same man who had just before said to the king of Sodom, "I will not take from a thread even to a shoe-latchet; I will not take anything that is thine." Ah, dear Christian reader, said we not well that the armour is needed *after* the conflict? "Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to *withstand* in the evil day." What follows? "And having *done all*, to *stand*." The foe comes to us *after* the conflict, because then he knows we so often have the armour *off*. See Elijah. He who could boldly stand before Ahab and exclaim, "There shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word," is seen a few hours *after* fleeing into the wilderness to hide

himself under a juniper tree, trembling like a leaf under the boastful threat of guilty Jezebel! See David. "Come to me," was his language to the giant of Gath, "and I will give thy flesh to the fowls of the air." A few hours afterwards he is seen fleeing into the wilderness, and exclaiming in miserable distrust of God, "I shall verily perish one day by the hands of Saul." Oh, sad unbelief of the heart! Blessed be God, though our faith is constantly fluctuating, always bringing dishonour and discredit upon Him, *He never changes!* He is our heart's only resting-place. Not our faith, not our resolutions, not our confidence in Him, our knowledge of Him. No. Only *Himself*.

Abram had asked, "Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?" God now proceeds to point out how he may be *sure* that he shall. "And He said unto him, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she-goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon." Mark this well, reader. Abram had asked, "Whereby shall I know?" and God points him to the *sacrifice*—to the *divided* heifer, the she-goat, and the ram. He points him to these as a pledge of the fulfilment of every promise, the full realisation of every blessing. Do we, like Abram, want to be assured that every promise of God will be fulfilled, that every blessing *in His storehouse* shall be ours? Where does God

still direct us to look ! To the cross—the *divided*, suffering, bleeding, dying Lamb on Calvary. There is God's answer to our question. "He that spared not His own Son," He seems to say to us, "but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Yes, heaven still points to the cross of Jesus for an answer to every question of the heart. There He bids us look and rest. There we turn in our darkest moments. There faith revives, and goes onward in its heavenward path with new energy. God be praised for that wondrous cross ! On it hang all our hopes. On it are suspended the issues of every step of our way. We behold the dying Lamb, and raise our songs of praise. We go forth from His side rejoicing. We go forth to victory.

And this encouragement is for the weakest, the poorest, the most needy. "The turtle-dove and the young pigeon" are there—God's provision for the *poor*. They are specially provided for. They are special objects in God's heart. They are bidden to look at the cross of Christ and take courage. That bleeding Lamb is their pledge that every blessing shall be theirs ; every promise of God's their everlasting portion.

"And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram ; and, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him." All the external channels of communication with the outer and visible world

were now closed, in order that Abram might hold communion with God. It is only when outward things are shut out, that the spiritual vision is clear. Then we see God. Then He opens His mind to us. Then He reveals to us the deep purposes of His heart. This took place, it is said, "when the sun was going down." There must be darkness round the earth before the lights of heaven can be seen. When darkness covered the earth, the light of redeeming love shone in its brightest rays on Calvary. So is it always. God's lights shine in the world's darkness. God opens wide the spiritual faculties of the soul when all the channels of communication with the outer world are closed. There is darkness over the earth ; the faculties of Abram's soul are closed to outward things ; but what wondrous realities are being made visible to him ! Oh, the things *unseen*, revealed in God's presence to the soul that leaves the world and self and sin behind, are always wonderful ! They are the true realities of life. There is nothing so real as they are. The mightiest of the mighty of this world's events are but shadows in comparison. The only real life is the life "hid with God." The only real existence is that spent in His presence. All else is shadow, dream, the spray dashed from the ocean's rock, the bubble glittering for a moment on the world's treacherous sea !

"And He said unto Abram, Know of a surety

that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years." Here was the rebuke to Abram's want of faith, as truly as was the dumbness of Zacharias for his unbelief. Abram had said, "Lord God, what wilt Thou give me?" God reveals to him much that saddens his heart. His hopes are thus subdued and chastened, and he is taught that the true resting-place of his heart is not in outward things, but in God Himself; not in the earnestly desired child, but in God alone. Alas, the fondest desires of the heart, if allowed to stand between us and God, when realised, end in sadness and sorrow. God is teaching us this continually. Let our most fondly cherished wishes be *fully* gratified, their sequel is a mingled experience of sadness and grief, as surely as the issue of the seed of Abram was a sequel of tears and afflictions, sorrows and sins. Surely we may learn again God's often taught, but never fully learned, lesson—"I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." Not the child, but God. Not the creature, but God. Not in anything below, but in Him above.

Reader, have you learned this lesson? Is there some desire between your soul and God, some cherished wish, some darling treasure—it matters not what—on which your heart is set, and leading you, as long as it remains ungratified, to exclaim, "Lord God, what wilt Thou give me?" Oh, learn

the lesson! When you get it, it will disappoint. It will not be equal to expectation. Earthly hopes are never realised. The tendency of the human mind, by *dwelling* on some *earthly* expectation, is to exaggerate its value, so that when realised it falls far below expectation. This disappointment is, must be, from the very nature of the human mind, the sequel of every cherished earthly desire. "My soul, wait thou *only* upon God, for my expectation is from *Him*." Expectation, however long cherished, however long dwelt upon, never falls below the mark when centred in Him. The fulfilment is always *beyond* the expectation, however great it may be, because it is in *God*.

Mother, is the shadow between thy soul and God a child? wife, is it a husband? merchant, is it thy business? nobleman, is it thy rank or wealth? Whatever it is, the end will be sorrow. Whatever comes between the soul and God will prove to be a thorn piercing the soul.

Perhaps you say, "*I value* them, but I hope I have not made an *idol* of them." Who is to judge? Did man *ever* confess, or even *know*, that what his heart was set upon had become an *idol*? Never. Can you say, "Well, whatever is between my soul and Him, let Him remove it. I am ready to let everything go for Him." This will be the test. Try to realise this. Suppose *at this moment* God *were to draw* near and take away that child, that

husband, that business, that rank and wealth, do you hold each one of them so in subservience to Him that you could say, "Take them, Lord : leave me only Thyself, and I shall be happy?" Can we say, and say truly—"the *dearest* idol?"

Ah, let us beware of these idols ! Let us keep everything in subjection to the Saviour. Let us ask the Lord earnestly to let nothing, *however dear*, take *His* place on the throne. We shall be saved from tearful eyes, and broken spirits, and bleeding hearts. We shall value them all according to their true estimate, simply because Christ is valued above all.

But when do these treasures become idols? Passing along the road, on a starlight night, I have looked up at the bright moon shining in all its brilliancy. I saw no cloud on its bright surface. But suddenly I became conscious of a less lustre, a dimmed brightness on the path. Looking up I saw a faint shadow, scarcely a cloud, almost a film on its beauteous surface. I saw it not before. I never should have seen it at all, till it came between me and the light, it was so faint and slight. So is it with many a thing here. It looks all right. We can detect nothing wrong. Ah ! let it pass between the soul and the light of God's presence. Then only will its true character be seen. Does it cast no shadow over the heart? Does it leave the brightness of the Lord's countenance shining on

the soul? Is Jesus seen through it clearly, sweetly? Is the soul enjoying unclouded fellowship with Him under it? Is there no check to the current of His peace and joy? If there be, reader, in however slight a degree, in the same degree has that thing become an *idol*. If peace and joy and holy fellowship with Jesus are not thine, depend upon it there is some idol between thy soul and God. It may be the world or the flesh, or the gifts and blessings of God, it matters not what, it is an idol. Oh, search and see! Am I truly living under the unsullied light of God's countenance? Is "Jesus only" on the throne in my heart? Is my heart *whole* for Him, or is it *divided*?" Search, reader, search. True joy consists only in one thing—being *whole-hearted* for Christ.

"And thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age." Abram had given up all for God. He had had to separate from his country, and kindred, and his father's house. Every earthly association was severed, and he had to walk with God, a stranger and a pilgrim, through an enemy's country. Now God promises him a renewal of the family tie in that bright and blessed world towards which he was journeying—"thou shalt go to thy *fathers* in peace." This is the glorious reward God sets before all who have to pass through that fiery path of separation. They *shall have* an eternal restoration of every severed

tie. The fond affections of the family hearth shall be renewed where no cloud can ever enter to mar their beauty, to overshadow their lustre, or cause distance or reservation between heart and heart. Human affection shall be deepened and intensified, yet be holy and happy. The eyes and hearts of all shall gaze upon Him who sits upon the throne, and catch His glory, which shall be reflected from heart to heart and from face to face. The tendernesses and affections of our earthly homes shall be gathered up again, and shall run throughout eternity in one even course, under the eye of Him from whose presence they now derive their highest joy, though amid tears and severances and sad farewells. Yes, "eye hath not seen" what that family scene shall be; "ear hath not heard" the holy, heavenly harmonies that shall be heard from that great gathering round the throne. This is "prepared" for all them that love Him. This is our glorious prospect, the promise of our God, on which hang all all our hopes, all our earnest longings.

"Thou shalt go to thy fathers in *peace*." Peace is the heritage of all God's people. When they came to the cross, it was then they tasted its stream. The Saviour's peace was given to them day by day, as they journeyed through the desert below. It was peace when they came to Jesus; peace as they journeyed on day by day; peace when they

stood on the border of the dark river through which they had to pass; peace as the ransomed spirit left its prison-house of clay to join the family on high—all was peace.

Blessed assurance for each child of God: "thou shalt go to thy *fathers in peace!*" One by one are passing from us of those we loved below. The smiles that once greeted us on earth, of "the trusted and the true," are lessening as we pass on. We can count them very easily. The golden links of heaven are stronger and more in number to-day than they were a few short years ago. What a host is gathering round the throne! What a greeting shall be, ere a few more suns rise and set! What warm embraces are at hand! How they make our hearts beat for joy at the very thought of them! Each hour is filling the ranks of the unfilled homes on high. And the morning is very near—oh, *how near!* Jesus is coming, and with Him every broken link shall be bound again, every sad farewell shall be left behind for ever. As each one passes on before us, leaving us to tread a still more lonely path, we count up our numbers and see how few are the links that bind us to this world. We are waiting to join them. We long for that eternal glory, that endless greeting. We are waiting in the hall below till the summons shall come from above. ,

"Yet more than all we long,
His glory to behold ;
Whose smile fills all that radiant throng
With ecstasy untold."

Our waiting cry is, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly ;" and the glad echo that greets us from heaven, and cheers our broken spirits on earth, is, "Surely, I come quickly !"

"We are like to servants
In their Master's hall,
Busied with our daily work,
Waiting for His call.

On the roof above us
Rows of bells are hung ;
One by one they summon each,
With their clamorous tongue.

Then, the servant bidden
Saith, '*That rings for me,*
Leaveth off his present toil,
Whatever it may be ;

Smootheth his apparel,
Looks a farewell round,
Passeth from his fellows
While the bell doth sound.

Mounteth up the staircase,
To his Lord doth go ;
Tarrieth in the upper rooms,
Comes no more below.

'Oh to be up yonder
Pressing near to God !

THE SMOKING FURNACE.

Thus we pine and murmur,
Counting service vain ;
But the loving Master
Reckons up our pain.

He, the unforgetting,
Marks our every sigh ;
When our heart is heaviest,
Comfort then is nigh.

When our hope is faintest,
And despair most strong,
And the night gloom deepens
Round the waiting throng,

Then the welcome summons
Suddenly shall ring,
And our glad steps hasten
To our Lord and King."

"Thou shalt be buried in a good old age."
What a delightful sight is the head hoary in God's service ! What a heart-cheering, holy sight to see, that while the hair is growing whiter, the heart is deepening in love to the Saviour, the life more unreservedly laid upon the altar as a living sacrifice to Him ! Oh what a blessed and glorious sight is this !

But how terrible the converse of this ! What more melancholy, what more heartrending sight *can* there be, than to see beneath the hoary head *an* unrenewed heart ! Can there be on earth *any-thing* more saddening than to behold the hoary

hairs consecrated to mammon, to the service of the world? Can there be a more heartrending sight than an unconverted, a worldly old age? Oh, if angels *can* weep, it is here! They bend over the battlements of glory in wonder and pity. An unconverted old age! Then conversion to God is *almost* hopeless. It is a rare occurrence. The die has been cast. The seal has been fixed upon the brow. Only a stupendous miracle can break the hardened heart—hardened perhaps by long years of familiarity with the gospel—and snatch the brand from the burning. Oh, fearful sight! Reader, art thou one of these aged unconverted ones? Oh, may God speak to thee now through these lines! Only He can. May He break that hard heart! May He rouse thy slumbering, yea, seared conscience—seared, perhaps, as with a hot iron! May He melt thy frozen soul, and bring thee to the foot of His cross as a poor, humbled sinner! Then, with all the dark picture of the past, shall there be hope in thy latter end. May the Judge standing at that awful bar on high have mercy upon thy soul! Neither heaven nor earth can draw a darker picture than *thine*, unconverted aged one!

“But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full.” God’s people could not enter the promised inheritance till “the iniquity of the

Amorites" was full. *They* must fill up their measure of rejected mercy, and despised grace, and indulged sin. Then should the Lord's people return.

It is the same now. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness, but is *longsuffering*, not willing that any should perish." We cannot yet enter our inheritance. "The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." "Not *yet*," but soon will be. The cup is in their hand. It is fast filling up. Mercy despised, grace rejected, warnings unheeded, entreaties mocked, the holy blood habitually trampled under foot and counted an *unholy* thing! These are the droppings hour after hour into that cup. It is now nearly full. Who shall conceive the vengeance! Who shall picture the blood-stained apparel of Him who cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah! Who shall describe that winepress of wrath preparing by unholy hands for their own unholy souls and bodies! Then shall "the ransomed of the Lord return with everlasting joy upon their heads." We shall then enter into our everlasting inheritance, and go no more out.

Let us now consider the most important and instructive portion of this chapter—the "furnace," the "burning lamp," and the "pieces."

"And it came to pass that when the sun went *down and it was dark*, behold a smoking furnace

and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces."

The narrative presents us with a striking type of the death of Christ. This was the covenant God made with Abram, through which all the promises of God were made good, and every blessing came down to him and his descendants. Looking at it as a representation of the great sacrifice of the Lamb of God and the part His people have in that sacrifice, it is very striking. "When the sun went down and it was dark," then was the light of heaven seen shining in meridian rays from Calvary. Then the *sacrifice*—symbolised here by "the pieces"—was smitten, and pierced, and rent asunder. "There was darkness over all the land," the historian tells us, and a cry from that cross rent the blackened vault of heaven, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

But what was seen between those "pieces?" "A smoking furnace, and a burning lamp." The former represents the sufferings, the persecutions, the trials and sorrows of the Lord's people. The latter, the light of God's presence—God's promises, and peace, and joys. Between the "pieces" both were seen. In the cross of Christ the Lord's people find both. When they come to Him—to know, to follow, to lean upon Him—it is in much tribulation. The cross is their portion hour by hour. It is indeed a furnace, a "smoking furnace,"

through which they are called to pass. But blessed be His holy name there is, along with that smoking furnace, the light, the comfort, the joy of the Lord's presence. In Christ both are found. Not till man comes between those "pieces," not till the sinner is led to hide in a crucified Saviour, does he know what it is to take up the bitter cross. Not till then does he know what it is to taste true joy. It is indeed darkness all around him then. Only in Christ has he light. "Between the pieces"—there is his place all through this dispensation. "Hid with Christ in God"—there he finds his light as well as his cross, his "smoking furnace and burning lamp."

But one sweet word here reminds him of a glorious time drawing near. If there is the "smoking furnace," it will not be always there. It "*passed* between the pieces." "Our light affliction is but for a moment." The day is at hand when there shall be no longer the "smoking furnace." In the meantime, though there is the anguish, the cry, the sin, yet God's people are between the pieces,—safe in Christ, and "all things working together for good," because in Him.

"In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram." We have in these words a most important truth brought before us. The same day on which God showed Abram the "pieces," He *showed him also his* part in them. There were the

pieces, and also the "*covenant made with Abram*," founded on the "*pieces*." Thus God would have all His people not only to *look to* the crucified Saviour, but also to see *their own individual interest* in that Saviour; not only to know that He died to put away *sin*, but also that by that death He put away *our sin*. The one should never be preached without the other. What avails religion if we cannot be *sure* of an individual interest in it? Far better be without it! What peace can that soul have, which, while looking to the cross, cannot see its own part in that great work of redemption. God would have us not only see the "*pieces*," but that in those pieces a "*covenant*" is *made* with the soul. He would have us to say with humility, yet with confidence, not only Jesus died for sinners, but "*Jesus died for me*;" not only "*He put away sin*," but "*He put away my sin*." "*I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live: yet not I; but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*" "*My Lord and my God*," said Thomas. "*My beloved is mine, and I am His.*"

Reader, rest satisfied with nothing short of this personal assurance of salvation. God shows you here that He would have you see your own interest in His "*finished*" work. He died for *you*. He has put away *your* sins. Oh, poor anxious sinner,

believe it, and be at peace. Accept that work—salvation finished, and finished for *thee*. Nothing *to be* done, but everything already *done* by Jesus. If you could do anything *to get* an interest in that work, it would not, it could not, be a “*finished*” work. As such it would be unworthy of God. It would be an incomplete thing and would give no peace. But “it is *finished*.” Oh! believe it. Believe it now. Take this full and freely offered salvation, and go in peace.

“In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates.” We notice here the expression “have I given.” The previous appearances of God to Abram brought with them *future* promises of blessing to him and his seed. Here, however, it is not a future promise, but a present possession. It is not as before, “I will give,” but “I have given.”

This is instructive. God had just shown Abram the “pieces,” and his own covenanted interest in them. In the sacrifice everything is *present* possession. In Christ all things are ours. “Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” “Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours.” *That sacrifice* made all the land—though then

filled with enemies—for ever the possession of Abram and his seed. The sacrifice of Christ makes the world and all things the believer's, though as yet it is the enemy's country. Having Christ, we have all things. Blessed and glorious truth! May we know our wealth! May we understand our high and holy position! May we, as "kings and priests," sons of God, and heirs of eternal life, never stoop from our lofty position to find a resting-place in anything lower. May we be whole-hearted for Him, in this day of lukewarmness, indecision, and declension. Many are going back and walking no more with Jesus. The love of many is waxing cold. Forms and ceremonies are taking the place of real life from God in the soul. On all sides the declension is rapid and startling. Let us see to it, that the rapidity of the current does not carry us along with it. If we breast it in our own strength, we are hopelessly lost. Our only strength, our only security is in Christ; our only hiding-place the Rock of Ages. As the storm rages more wildly outside, and the horizon grows darker and darker, as the droppings of the last thundercloud begin to fall faster and faster, may we shelter ourselves more closely than ever in the clefts of the smitten Rock, and wait with patience the hour when the storm shall cease, and the wild waves cease to roar, and the blackened sky give place to a bright morning, a "morning without clouds," when "the

Sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings," and chase every shadow and every cloud and every sorrow from our blighted world, and all shall be bright and glorious again as Eden was, reflecting in ten thousand forms of light and life and beauty, the glory of Him who is fairer than the children of men, and who shall lead His people to "living fountains of waters, and wipe away all tears from their eyes." Hasten, Lord, that glorious hour! Come quickly, and tarry not!

I journey forth rejoicing,
From this dark vale of tears,
To heavenly joy and freedom,
From earthly bonds and fears:
Where Christ, our Lord, shall gather
All His redeemed again,
His kingdom to inherit:
Good-night till then!

Go to thy quiet resting,
Poor tenement of clay!
From all thy pain and weakness,
I gladly haste away:
But still in faith confiding,
To find thee yet again,
All glorious and immortal:
Good-night till then!

Why thus so sadly weeping,
Beloved ones of my heart!
The Lord is good and gracious,
Though now He bids us part.

Oft have we met in gladness,
And we shall meet again,
All sorrow left behind us :
Good-night till then !

I go to see His glory,
Whom we have loved below !
I go, the blessed angels,
The holy saints to know.
Our lovely ones departed
I go to find again,
And wait for you to join us :
Good-night till then !

I hear the Saviour calling,
The joyful hour has come !
The angel-guards are ready
To guide me to our home ;
Where Christ, the Lord, shall gather
All His redeemed again,
His kingdom to inherit :
Good-night till then !

some special act in their lives, witnesses to something in God—to some point in His character. This seems the more probable view and more borne out by the original, and yet I doubt not both views are true. The Word of the Lord is a *two-edged* sword. It seems to be so here. It is a truth cutting both ways. There are numerous instances in this blessed Book of a similar kind. Why should we pare down God's blessed Word so frequently to one particular view? Is not truth many-sided? May not one particular passage reflect various shades of Divine truth? Surely it may! God's words are like the rays of the sun casting their brightness through the descending shower, and reflecting them in varied but beauteous colours on the dark background of our sin-stained hearts. Oh for largeness of heart and expansion of mind in things pertaining to God!

Perhaps the expression "*cloud* of witnesses" is not without meaning. The cloud is everywhere in Scripture the symbol of God's presence. It was an inseparable accompaniment of God's *people*. Christ and His people are *one*. What drew attention of old to the *people* was the cloud. "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness like *pillars of smoke*?" So it is Christ in His people that is the great object of attraction and not they themselves. It is the *cloud* accompanying the *witnesses*, coming up out of the wilderness, that

the Spirit of God notices in this chapter. It *may* be so in the chapter before us.

Another feature is the *faith* of these witnesses. As we look over the recorded list in the previous chapter, we fail almost to discern *any* faith in the history of some of the characters—at least any worthy of the Spirit's notice, or of being held up as an example. "If there be any," we say, "it is, at least, so overlaid with infirmity and sin in the individual as to be beneath notice, or at any rate unworthy of record." So man judges: but God is not like man. He notices the *least* germ of faith, and passes over the infirmity and sin. He can discern a bright spark in the heart of even a Rahab. He will not pass it over. It is treasured in His heart and shall have its reward. The names of the world's great ones, together with their mighty deeds, have long ago been buried in oblivion; but the faith of a Rahab survives them all, and is set before the Church as a bright example. Say not, "How much deception there was connected with it!" The deception was the evil, unchanged heart. The faith was the new principle which had not yet had time to work. Reader, when God put that faith into thy soul, He put it into a heart not one whit better than this harlot's. Cast not the first stone. "Look at the hole of the pit from whence thou hast been digged, and the rock from whence thou hast been hewn." The treasure is

in "earthen vessels." Be humble, and let all the glory be to Him who made thee to differ.

"Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us." We notice in these words a remarkable distinction between "weights" and "sins." A weight is not in itself a sin. It may *become* a sin, but in itself it is not sinful. It may be in itself something quite right, quite in accordance with the mind of God. A man may have his business, his family, his worldly interests, and many important matters on his mind. These are all quite right. They are God's appointed portion for each of His children. But when these things come to press heavily on the mind and heart; when they become a weight, a drag, so that we are hindered in running the race to heaven, then they have become sins. When the cares of business, or the concerns of a family, occupy an undue prominence in a man's mind, and make him so anxious that his thoughts are continually running in that direction, then they have become sins. When anything—no matter what—*below Christ* takes up so much of a man's time, or occupies his thoughts so as to leave him little time to be alone with God, or interferes with his spiritual communion with God, or so occupies him as that he cannot at a moment drop it and enjoy his Saviour, then, whatever it may be, the weight has become a sin. Whatever *it may be that* draws a film between the soul and

God, and hides the brightness of a Saviour's countenance, or that so *hangs* upon it as to make it run heavenward with a slower pace, then that weight has become a sin.

In fact, it is like Mary's sorrow. All sorrow is sacred. When, however, it keeps the soul too long or too exclusively hovering round the sepulchre, or hinders it from seeing a living Saviour at its side, then it becomes a sin.

It is an important distinction. We see in God's Word the same distinction between "transgression" and "sin." "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven: whose sin is covered." These are by no means synonymous terms. Transgression is the *fruit*; sin is the root. Transgression is the stream; sin is the fountain. Transgression is the effect; sin is the cause.

We have a remarkable instance of this distinction in the eighth chapter of St. John's Gospel. The scribes and Pharisees brought before the Lord a woman taken in adultery—"in the very act." Their object was to tempt the Saviour. "Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned: but what sayest Thou?" If the Saviour *condemned* the woman, where would be His *mercy*? If He *forgave* her, He would *set aside the law*. They thought He was on the horns of a dilemma. They had Him fast. The marvellous wisdom displayed in the Lord's answer is not seen at first.

sight, and is attributable to the opening words of the chapter. Of course we speak of Him as *man* only. We are told, "Every man went unto his own home," but "Jesus went unto the mount of Olives." He came forth from the place of *prayer* "into the temple." Hence the power and the wisdom displayed in His answer. Yes, prayer is power! Coming from the inner chamber to meet the temptations of the devil,—this is the sure path to victory. Mark it here in the case of the Saviour. "He that is without *sin* among you, let him first cast a stone at her." The scribes and Pharisees point out the *transgression*—the "act" of adultery. They point the finger to the *fruit*—transgression; the Lord points them to the root—sin. The Lord does not say, "He that is without *transgression*, let him first cast a stone at her." He could not have said that. If He had, these men *could* have cast the stone at her, for they were *not* guilty of the *transgression*—the act of adultery. He says, "He that is without *sin* among you," and thus shows them that the great evil is, not in the effect, but in the *cause*—sin; that they ~~are~~ all sinners; and that as a *sinner* man is the criminal, and not as a transgressor only. He thus cuts the ground from under them completely, and shows them that "there is no difference" between them and her as to guilt; that it is not degrees of guilt He notices, *but the cause* of guilt—sin. "All have *sinned*"

(it says nowhere all have *transgressed*, though that also is true) "and come short of the glory of God." What marvellous wisdom He thus displayed in His reply ! Nowhere in the Word of God have we a more striking instance. Thus it was that while forgiving the woman's *sin* He yet vindicated Moses' law, by leaving it still untouched as the great denouncer of man's *transgression*.

The way in which the scribes and Pharisees looked at this woman is a perfect picture of the human heart. Look, for instance, at the parable of the Pharisee and the publican. The Pharisee looks only at *transgression*, and says, "I thank God I am not as other men ; the extortioner, the adulterer, or even as this publican." He looks at the transgression,—at the stream, and not at the fountain. He thanks God he is not like these men. And so he could, and justly, thank God he was not like them. So far as transgression was concerned, he was free from such outward crimes. He judged as a *natural* man, and natural man never goes deeper than mere *transgression* in his estimate of sin. In fact, this is all he *can* see. He cannot go deeper, for he has not the *spiritual sight to penetrate*. He knows nothing of *sin*. All he knows is of *transgression*. It is only the Spirit of God that can show him *sin*. Only He can give him that sight that will make him look *deeper*. And herein is the beautiful and striking contrast.

of the publican. He looks not at *transgression*. He passes by the stream, and goes to the fountain. "God be merciful to me a *sinner*." Ah, the head was down; the face was covered; the breast was smitten; the whole man was covered with dust and ashes! All was right before God here. He had *spiritual* sight. The other had *natural* sight. One spoke as a *man*. The other spoke as a *spiritual* man.

And the scribes and Pharisees present us with a true picture of our own hearts at all times. What is it we are always pointing out in the conduct of others? Their *transgressions*. What is it we are always having on our lips, always condemning in them? Their *transgressions*. What is it we are constantly doing—we Christian men and women—doing every day? Dragging some poor sinner like ourselves into God's presence, and pointing the finger of reproach at some *transgression* we see in him. And what is the Lord saying to us every time we do it? He is cutting the ground from under us, by leading us to look at the *root*, and to see that we are *all* in the same condemnation. Every time our fellow-sinners' *transgression* is in our mind and on our lips, He whispers, "He that is without *sin* among you, let him first cast the stone." "Go down deeper, to the *cause*, and see if you are any better than that poor adulteress, or *murderer, or thief*." Reader, mark this, and look

not at thy transgressions, nor yet at the transgressions of others. Go down deeper, and behold thyself a *sinner*, all dark and guilty within. Thou who art secretly distinguishing thyself from others because thou hast not been guilty of their transgressions, behold the *fountain*, the *root*, the *cause* within thee ! Thou art a *sinner* with all thy freedom from *transgression*. It is as a *sinner* thou art under the wrath of God, not as a *transgressor*. Oh think of this, and betake thee *now* to the *blood of Jesus*, which can *alone* reach that hidden root within thee !

Let us now return to the consideration of the passage from which we have diverged. Next to the distinction between weights and sins, let us notice the expressive word, "*lay aside*." When we lay aside anything, it is not, so to speak, *thrown away*. If we take off a garment, we do not cast it aside as useless. We have an appointed place, and there we "*lay aside*" that garment. It is a place known in the household, and specially set apart for the purpose. So is it with regard to the "*weights*" of which we have been speaking. There is a place set apart for them. ' There they are to be laid—taken off like a garment, and put in the appointed place. What is that place ? "*Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you.*" It is Jesus. On Him these weights are to be laid. He is at our very side for the purpose. "*Cast thy burden upon*

the Lord, and He shall sustain thee." Let not that weight rest upon the burdened heart, upon the wearied mind, upon the jaded body, upon the troubled spirit, or deepen one more furrow on that careworn brow. *That* is not the place for it. "Lay it aside" on Jesus. This was the purpose for which God laid it upon you, that it should take *you* to the Saviour, there to lay it on Him, and thus learn how well He can bear it. Remember, this is heaven's appointed place—"the nail in the sure place"—on which is to be hung every weight of the human heart. And remember also the word, "Let us lay aside *every* weight,"—what presses lightly as well as what presses heavily. Not only the great trials of life, but the little crosses of each hour. The great trials of life come but seldom. The famine, the pestilence, the earthquake—these are easily seen, and God's hand recognised by the most careless. Nor yet the sad bereavement, making the heart to bleed and the eye to weep; nor the sudden overwhelming crash in business, plunging into poverty those who once had every comfort. These, and such-like, are of rare occurrence. Not these alone are to be cast on the Saviour, but the little crosses, the little disappointments, the little vexations and annoyances of each hour, which chafe the spirit so sorely, and gradually whiten the locks with care—all those little circumstances in domestic life, *and in public life*, which we call things going

across. Perhaps the servants are not what they ought to be; perhaps your children have been unusually fretful; perhaps some word may have been uttered, thoughtlessly, which has given rise to hasty words or tempers, or ruffled another's spirit; perhaps some member of the family has some failing or infirmity which is constantly exposing the household to discomposure of spirit, or making things not as pleasant as they might be. Whatever it may be, "Let us lay aside *every* weight." Go to Jesus with them all. Let Him bear them for you. Let them not hinder you in running the race. You cannot bear them yourself, little though they seem to be. You cannot; and God never intended that you should. If you try to bear them yourself, they will crush you. It is the nature of all trials to become heavier by the heart dwelling upon them. The feather will come to weigh like a mountain of lead. Trials become heavier by being borne. So it will be with you. Bear it yourself, it will weigh you down; it will crush you. You cannot *run* the race to heaven. Impossible. Oh, take "*every* weight" then, and "lay them aside," on Jesus, and see how sweet, how full, how free His compassions are to your troubled spirit! Try Jesus, dear, suffering servant of Christ. Lay your weights there, and learn what a precious, all-sufficient Saviour He is.

Some will come to you by the way of offering

sympathy, and will say, "Why do you allow such a trifle as that to weigh upon you! How can a sensible person like you take such a thing as that to heart? Fling it away, and think nothing more about it." Ah, dear reader, the man, whoever he may be, that can speak thus, is utterly unfit to sympathise! Keep such a man away from the troubled heart. He is but one of Job's miserable comforters. He forgets what trial really is. Suppose the *Lord* were to treat us that way, where would His tried and tempest-tost children be now? Ah, Jesus comforts not His dear ones thus! Such comfort betrays a sad state of mind. Trial is not measured by our *estimate* of it. One man may look upon my sorrow with a smile, and I may regard his as equally trifling. "The heart knows *its own* bitterness." "Bear ye *one another's* burdens." "Weep with *those that weep.*" The tears of the Lord's suffering ones, from whatever cause they may spring, are reflected in the face of Jesus. He weeps in our sorrows, and rejoices in our joys. Childhood's tears find a place in His heart as well as those of the strong man. Take all to Him, dear tried one. The changed look, the altered expression, the unkind word, the demand you cannot meet, the charge you cannot answer, the problem you cannot solve, the perplexity you cannot unravel, the net-work undefined, that twines itself *around your feet*, casts a shadow over the brow,

and dulls the elasticity of the once happy spirit—oh, take *all* to Jesus! “Lay aside” that weight, whatever it may be. Hesitate not because it seems a *little* one. It will not be *little* long if you bear it yourself. Shrink not for fear of troubling Him. Let not your evil heart say, “Trouble not the Master.” Your danger, your *sin*, is that you trouble Him *so little*. Oh deal very closely with Jesus, by “laying aside every weight” on Him!

So also with your sins. “Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us.” This does not refer to any particular sin, such as unbelief. It means simply any sin to which the soul feels itself particularly exposed, whatever besets us most easily, and into which we are liable to fall. “Lay aside” these sins. How? Take them to the blood of Jesus. We have thus two things to grapple with all through life’s journey—our weights and our sins. For both of these there is a rich provision at our very side—the *person* of Christ for the weights, the *blood* of Christ for the sins. Therefore we are encouraged to “lay aside” both the one and the other.

But mark how important is the word “lay aside,” when applied to our “sins.” Nothing produces such a deadening effect on the soul as sin. Nothing more effectually keeps it back in the race to heaven. The heaviest drag of all is *forgotten* sin—sin committed, and not immediately confessed,

and thus forgotten. These sins we are daily falling into. They enter in through our eyes and ears, our thoughts and words, our deeds and duties. We rush into the thick of life's daily cares, and are absorbed in them. There are impure thoughts, hasty words and tempers, sights and sounds, only too readily suggesting evil deeds, acts not straightforward, or thoroughly transparent services, yea, holy services not free from self-interest. These, apart from sins of darker type, we are all of us more or less daily falling into. Perhaps our spiritual sensibility is not deep, our consciences not very tender, so that we do not think much of sins like these. Alas, there are many of God's children with whom this is the case. There is a sad, a fearful lack of spiritual sensibility, of tenderness of conscience. Only the *grosser* sins of life affect them. So far have they fallen, so little are their souls in living communion with God, that if their outward life is comparatively free from these, there is no secret compunction of soul. No wonder they live in the *outer court*, and realise so little of the preciousness of Christ. There is an earthliness about them. They live in the world's atmosphere. There is little inward peace and joy. They are spiritually dull and heavy. It must be so. There is only one antidote to this—that the soul be much alone with God. So strongly is the current of the *world pressing* upon us on every side, that we *must*

h

be dragged down its fatal stream. In the history of you and me, reader, the *daily* history, every *hour* of the day, should be linked with heaven. Whatever we are engaged in, there should be no hour of that day in which some thought does not shape itself into prayer, and rise to the throne of God. In the believer's history the hours of the day are sanctuaries from which the worshipper should never be absent. This will be to link heaven and earth in one glorious intercourse. This will keep the soul *calm* in the midst of the excitement of life's daily duties, and, *if the Lord should come* in the midst of them, make it ready to receive Him with joy. "Be ye yourselves like unto men which wait for their lord."

But to return to forgotten sin. Perhaps in *thought*, or else in *word*, or it may be in *act*, we have sinned. Conscience quickly tells us of it. Perhaps, indeed, very gently; so gently that there is danger of our being unaware of its reminding. What do we do? Do we go *at once* in *thought* to the *blood* with that sin? Most probably not. The hours pass on, and we have forgotten it. The tide of other things rolling in upon the soul has thrust it out of sight. Ah, reader, though we have forgotten our sin, that sin has not forgotten us! It has added another crust on the heart. It has drawn another film between the soul and the bright shining of God's countenance. It has cast

another shadow between us and heaven. We have forgotten it, but it has secreted itself within. It has found a lodgment. One look at the blood at the moment would have set all right. But we did not, and now we feel it. The day has come to a close. We open the Word. How dull and insipid it seems! How we seem to read, and read, and obtain no light, enjoy no comfort, derive no profit! We close it, and bend the knee in prayer. What an earthliness of spirit there is in us! What unaccountable deadness! What an inability to speak with God! What a mockery it seems! We are speaking to the air; we *cannot* pray! We ask "How has all this come? What has been the cause?" Ah, it is forgotten sin. There is a secretion, a lodger in the soul, poisoning its purest springs. Nothing but the blood can restore it. We ought to have gone at the time when conscience gently touched us, and then this sorrow would have been saved. We did not; and now God is showing us how bitter sin is, and that before He can thaw the frozen heart and unloose the sealed lips there must be a baptism in the cleansing blood of Jesus. O reader! learn the solemn lesson! "Lay aside" the sin, the moment it is committed, in the blood of the Lamb. Go in thought to its precious stream, and then all will be well with thy soul. Deal closely, deal continually, deal earnestly *with the blood*. Let not sin be forgotten and the

enemy of thy soul triumph. Be not ignorant of his subtilty. Be beforehand with him. "Lay aside" the weight, and let not that become a sin; "lay aside" the sin, and let not that become a "weight" to keep thee back in the race.

But what does all this imply? That our souls have close dealings with God every hour of the day; that we bring Him into everything; that we have one aim before us each day of our lives, come what may—to walk with God. Reader, *is* this *your* aim? What "weights" or "sins" can you be "laying aside" if you have not dealings with God continually? It is through such "laying aside" that we come to *prove* the Saviour, how precious He is as our burden-bearer and sin-bearer. His preciousness is then no *theory*, no mere doctrine. Oh no! It becomes a deep reality. It is only then we come to *know* Him. It is thus we are "taught of God." Reader, do you know Him thus? Have you this constant dealing with Him? Is Christ precious to you from such close dealings? Have they made Him "the chief of ten thousand, the altogether lovely" to your soul?

But to proceed with the passage. "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us." The Christian race is activity, progress, growth. It is no half-hearted work. We are to "run" that race, but run it with "patience." This is not the word we should have used. We should have said, run

with diligence, run with speed, run with haste. No, says the Spirit of God, "run with *patience*." Why is this? The word is Divinely chosen. When we see a man in a hurry, or running with haste, it occurs to us that he may be too late if he does not make haste—that he may miss the object of his race. This cannot be with the child of God. To him the prize is *sure*. It is secured to him by the finished work of the Lord Jesus. It forms part of the everlasting covenant made between God and Christ, and in which every blessing is secured, eternally secured, to the soul that trusts in Jesus. The victory, the prize, the "crown of glory that fadeth not away," are all in that covenant; and come what may, the child of God shall not miss them. These things are not conditional to the believer. If they were, he never would have *one*. The prize never could be gained. These blessings *were* conditional, it is true. They were all to come to the believer, on condition that *Christ* fulfilled the terms of that covenant. God made that covenant with Christ, and seemed to say, "If You fulfil all the terms of it, all blessings shall be Yours, on behalf of Your people." Christ came and *did* fulfil the terms of that covenant. And Christ, speaking through David, says, "He (God) hath made with me (Christ) an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure." Therefore all things are sure to *the believer*. They are made sure by what Christ

has done. The conditions on which they were to be given were all fulfilled by the Lord Jesus. Therefore, the believer's blessings are all eternally secured to him in Christ. His salvation is secured. His victory over death is secured. His prize is secured. His crown of glory is secured. Every step of his journey through this troublesome world, and the grace that is needed for it, is "*ordered in all things, and sure.*" Every hour of sorrow is an "ordered" hour. Every perplexing dispensation is "ordered." Every dark path, every bitter cup, every tearful eye, every bleeding heart—all are "ordered." Not only "ordered," but "*ordered in all things.*" The timely relief, the lightened pressure, the helping hand at the critical moment, the kind word in due season, the series of little circumstances in an hour of trial, when the mind is too excited to think and too burdened to arrange—all are "ordered" things. Not only so, but every comfort, every help, every blessing needed by the feeble, helpless one, at such trying seasons, has inscribed on it in God's own hand—"sure." You shall not lack one, believer, whoever you are. They are all secured to you in that everlasting covenant, every condition of which was fulfilled by Christ on your behalf. And having this everlasting covenant, what then shall be your portion here but blessing?

What then? Why then another pilgrim song;
And then a hush of rest Divinely granted;
And then a thirsty stage, (ah me, so long!)
And then a brook, just where it most is wanted.

What then? The pitching of the evening tent!
And then, perchance, a pillow rough and thorny;
And then some sweet and tender message, sent
To cheer the faint one for to-morrow's journey.

What then? The wailing of the midnight wind;
A feverish sleep; a heart oppressed and aching;
And then a little water-cruze to find
Close by my pillow, ready for my waking.

What then? I am not careful to inquire:
I know there will be tears, and fears, and sorrow;
And then a loving Saviour drawing nigher,
And saying, "I will answer for the morrow."

What then? For all my sins His pardoning grace;
For all my wants and woes His loving-kindness;
For darkest shades the shining of God's face;
And Christ's own hand to lead me in my blindness.

What then? A shadowy valley, lone and dim;
And then a deep and darkly rolling river;
And then a flood of light—a seraph hymn,—
And God's own smile, for ever and for ever!

Therefore it is that there is no haste, no hurry,
in the heavenly race. We are to run, but with
"patience." All is sure, for all is secured in Christ
Jesus our Lord.

"Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith." The great design of God in setting this race before His people is to make them like His dear Son ; to mould and fashion us day by day into His blessed image. This is the explanation of all God's dealings both in sorrow and in joy. To accomplish this great purpose of God, however, there must be some great, transforming medium. Sorrow of itself will never make us like Christ. Nay, its tendency may be to make us very unlike Him. It may harden the heart. It may stir up feelings of rebellion and hatred. No ; afflictions will never of themselves mould us into His image. What will then ? Only beholding Himself. Therefore we are exhorted to run this race, "*looking* unto Jesus." It is as if God would say, "My great desire is not the running in the race, but to make you like my beloved Son ; to so mould and shape and fashion you on earth, that when you come into my presence there may be some resemblance in you to Him." This can only be accomplished by the eye and the heart keeping constantly before it the one great transforming medium—Christ Jesus. We know how true this is in a scientific point of view. No faculty of the body is so powerful for taking in impressions from external objects as the eye. Doubtless this is the reason why the figure is used. Association begets assimilation. What the mind most dwells on it becomes like. *The*

desires strongly bent on sensuality will betray that very sensuality in the countenance. The heart strongly directed towards the Saviour will develop the calmness and meekness of that Saviour in its countenance. If we had greater discernment, if our own mental and spiritual faculties had not been so dulled by sin, we should be able to look in each other's countenances, and from the very expression written in them, trace the prominent affections of the heart, trace the governing principle under which it lived and moved. In heaven we shall be free from sin. A wonderful change will in consequence take place in all our bodily, mental, and spiritual faculties. We shall see, see deeply, see into each other's hearts and minds. All will be transparency there; and nothing will be seen *in* us or *without* us, that will not be reflected in the countenance of the Lord Jesus. As one has beautifully remarked, "the angels will know us to be brothers and sisters of the Lord Jesus by our likeness to Him." In calling us to look to Jesus in this race, we see a great principle in God's Word. Man's tendency, when he wants to find some foundation on which he can rest for salvation, is to look *within*—into his heart. Does he need peace? He looks at his own heart to see if he can find in its state any warrant for that peace. This is the direction in which the thoughts of man naturally *and invariably* turn—inward. Now when the

salvation of the soul is the question, or when peace and assurance are the points to be settled, the word of God never, in any instance, directs man to look within. He is always directed to look *outside* himself. “*Look* unto me, and be ye saved :” “*behold* the Lamb of God :” “looking unto Jesus :” “*Ho*, every one that thirsteth.” It is true that the Christian is to look *inward*, to see that there is nothing in his life and conduct, in his desires and motives and aims, that is hindering the brightness of the Lord’s countenance from shining on his soul. But not so in the matter of salvation. He is *then* to look *out*. Salvation has been accomplished by the finished work of Jesus—*look out* at that, and accept it. *Thy* sin has all been put away by that blood shed on Calvary—*look out* at that, and be at peace. God teaches us this truth in many ways. If in sorrow or trial or trouble, how is the heart comforted? Not by looking *in* and dwelling on its troubles, but by a word spoken from *without* by some kind friend, or by some deed of kindness from without. If there be diseases in the frame, do we look within for the remedy? No; that is *without*, in the physician and his medicine. In fact this truth is taught us in the meanest affairs of life, and forced upon our notice by almost every object in the natural world around us. Everything seems to say, “Look *without*, not *within* !” The Word of God in its teachings is but

nature's counterpart. God is the great Teacher in both. Nature is only the echo of revelation, and rightly interpreted, teaches the same lesson—"look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth ; for I am God, and there is none else."

Observe how remarkably the Bible confirms this view. "We all with open face, *beholding* as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are *changed into the same image*." "It doth not yet appear what we shall be ; but we know that when He shall appear we shall be *like Him ; for we shall see Him* as He is." "They shall *see His face* ; and His Father's name" (the *name* is the expression of *character*) "shall be in their foreheads." Thus we see that the great transforming process on earth, in running this heavenward race, is ever "looking unto Jesus." Looking in sin. Looking in sorrow. Looking in joy. Looking there, and only there. This is the direction every eye takes in heaven. This is the direction in which every eye should be bent on earth.

And He is "the Author and Finisher of our faith." He *began* the work in the Church, and He will *finish* it. "The hands of Zerubbabel laid the foundations of this house : his hands shall also finish it." "He began the good work in the soul of the awakened sinner, and He will finish it."

The first thought, the first reflection, the first dim and distant feeling after Christ, the first uplifted

eye, the first falling tear, the first gleam of peace and joy, of sunshine after darkness—He *began* it all, and *having* begun it He will surely finish it. He puts not *His* hand to the plough and looks back. Oh no! “He which hath *begun* a good work in you will *perform* it to the day of Christ Jesus.” He is the Finisher as well as the Author of our faith. Let us take courage then, and “be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.” “The path of the just is as the shining light which,” despite all intervening clouds, “shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” Every lamb in the Shepherd’s flock is “*kept* by the power of God unto salvation.”

“Not one object of His care
Ever suffered shipwreck there.”

But let us notice another precious truth. “Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

Three things were set before the Lord Jesus—the race, the joy, the crown. These three things are set before each of His followers. He is their great Forerunner, who has entered for them within the veil. A forerunner is one who leads a company after him. Thus Jesus has run that race, and is now leading His people after Him, that they

may be with Him where He is and behold His glory.

He too was a cross-bearer. What made Him endure the cross? The joy set before Him. His eye was never off that joy for a moment. And is not the same joy set before us? Is not the same glorious prize to consummate our journey? Shall not we, too, wear the same crown, and sit on the same glorious throne? Surely we shall: "The glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given them."

Why are we not cross-bearers too? Why do we shrink from it? Why do we try to shift it off, or make it press as lightly as possible? Why is there so little bold confession of Christ in *word* and *deed* before men? Because our hearts are so little in the joy before us, our eye is so little on the crown and the glory of the resurrection morning. We live so far below our standing. We live as beggars, instead of king's sons and daughters. We live down here; very little above. The glory is such a distant thing with us. It is separated by years, or dimmed by earthly influences. Hence the little enduring of the cross.

And not only so, but these are truths which react on each other. We bear so little of the cross because our hearts are so little in the coming joy *and* glory. We enter so little into the joy because *we bear so little of the cross*. The heart in the

joy will make us take up the cross ; and the taking up of the cross will bring great joy into the soul. "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so also our consolation aboundeth in Christ." Mark, reader, the "as" and "so." The two things run side by side. The one is in exact proportion to the other. *As* the suffering, *so* the consolation. The deeper your soul goes down into the valley of Christ's sufferings, the deeper will be the joy in your heart. If you have not the one, you *cannot* have the other. Is there little outward suffering? then there is little inward joy. Is your path comparatively smooth, the sky above you as to all earthly things bright, and do you meet with few piercings of heart from the world in which you live? Then, reader, your soul is *asleep*. The outward absence of conflict is a certain symptom of the inward sleep of the soul. There may be nothing in your outward conduct indicating decay ; but it is surely there. No conflict? then no *running* in the race. No conflict? then no joy. The soul is asleep, though there may be no flaw the keenest eye can detect ; though the profession may be so clear and sound as to elicit the admiration and applause of all men. Reader, may God write this solemn warning on your heart ! The coming of the Lord Jesus will be preceded by very little cross-bearing among God's people. It will be a day of deep sleep ; a time when there shall be a great falling away, even

among those we have reason to believe to be true Christians. It shall be a day the striking feature of which both among God's people and the people of the world shall be, "having a *form* of godliness but denying the power." The Lord shall find *most* of His own asleep. He shall find them in scenes and circumstances and states of heart that shall crimson their faces with shame when they behold Him. The door is open now, and God's great work is going gloriously on. Soon it shall be shut. And then will follow the form of godliness, the absence of the cross, the sleep and slumber of religious indifference. The spiritual light shall be dim in God's people. Compromise and concession will make rapid advances. In such an hour shall the coming of the Son of Man be. Reader, beware! Look to yourself! That day is very near! May God keep you! "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

But mark the expression—"endured the cross." He did not *wear* it; He *bore* it. There is a great deal of difference between *cross-wearing* and *cross-bearing*. To *wear* the cross is easy. To *bear* it is hard. Yet the hollow hypocrisy of the world would fain make men believe they are *bearing* the cross because *wearing* it. They want to make *men* believe they are bearing the cross. They are little concerned about *bearing* it under the approving eye of *God alone*. There is far too much of this cross-

wearing among us. It is on the *increase*, and simply because its inward reality is on the *decrease*. Cross-wearing is becoming *fashionable*. It is fascinating our young men and young women. It is beginning to possess *matchless* charms for "silly women, laden with sins." O reader! be it yours to be a cross-bearer, to stoop down and "take up your cross daily," looking only for the approving smile of your Saviour.

But I would not have you suppose that you are to *make* crosses for yourself. That is the other extreme of the self-righteous picture. No. You are not to *wear* the cross, nor to *make* it, but *bear it when the world makes it for you*. This is to be like Christ. The *world* made the cross for Him, and He meekly and lovingly *bore* it. Do you do the same. And depend upon it the more that cross is borne in *secret*, the less will there be of its *outward* manifestation in the folly and hypocrisy of cross-wearing.

But mark the closing words of this verse—"And is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." He is "*set down*." The expression is significant. The priests under the law never "*sat down*" in the offering of their sacrifices. They were always "*standing*." Why? Sitting down is a figure of rest and satisfaction. "Those sacrifices never made the comers thereunto perfect." There was always again a remembrance of sin. They were imperfect.

and could give no permanent rest to the conscience of the worshipper. "It is impossible that the blood of bulls and of goats could take away sin." Christ's sacrifice was a perfect one. It needed not to be repeated. This showed its perfection, for "by *one* offering He hath perfected *for ever* them that are sanctified,"—so that now Christ is said to "sit down" in heaven. He is *satisfied* with His finished work on Calvary. There was no rest before for the soul. There was no satisfaction in heaven before. But now God and man are at *rest* in the finished work of Jesus.

But mark the expression—"set down at the right hand of the throne of God." The right hand of the throne is the place of the *heir*. The Prince of Wales takes the place at the right hand of the throne of England on all state occasions, and none else but he can take it. Why? Because he is the heir to that throne. This is the figure used in the passage before us. Christ is "set down at the right hand of the throne of God." He is the heir to it." "The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord Jesus Christ." He shall soon come forth as "King of kings, and Lord of lords." On His head shall be "many crowns."

Observe how two things are united here—the cross and the crown. He "endured the *cross*, and is set down at the right hand of the *throne*." It is *the same* with us. From the moment we came to

the *cross*, God put before us the *crown*. "Ye do show the Lord's *death*—till He *come*." "Unto Him that loved us and *washed us from our sins in His own blood*." What is the next thing? "*Behold He cometh* with clouds." Between the cross and the crown the Church has no portion on earth. Her place in the meantime is sorrow, suffering, testimony. From that cross her eye overleaps everything to the coming of the Lord. As it was with her Saviour, so is it with her. "We *look for* the Saviour." Not for an improved world. Not for the evangelisation of mankind. Not for anything but Jesus only. We shall be "satisfied when we awake with His likeness;" but never till then.

"For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. 'Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.' Weariness comes first—the effect of difficulties, trials, and persecutions continually pressing upon us. Then follows faintness,—such spiritual weakness as gives one the idea of death. The believer becomes so discouraged by the way that he is tempted to relax his energies and become less wakeful and watchful. Then follows faintness, the semblance of death. The cross is not borne. The soul's spiritual health declines. The man seems like one of the world. There is no mark of heaven upon him. What is the antidote?—"con-

sider Him." See what He bore for your sake. See what a precious salvation He won for you! See at what a cost He won it! See how He loved you, yea, how He loves you still! See how He is interceding for you on high! See what a crown of glory He has won for you! Ye tried and tempted, ye buffeted and storm tossed ones, "consider Him!" Ye trembling, weary, and exhausted ones, ye bereaved and desolate ones, "consider Him." "*Ye* have not yet resisted unto blood," but He did. Ye have not yet borne the bloody scourge, and cross, and crown of thorns; but He has. Ye have not yet "endured *such* contradiction of sinners" against yourselves; but He has. Ye have not yet "sweat as it were great drops of blood" like those which fell from the agonised brow in Gethsemane; but He has. Oh, "consider Him" and be neither weary nor faint.

"And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him." To *despise* the Lord's chastening is the sin of many. What is it to "despise" it? It is to make light of it, to think meanly of it, to allow it to rest lightly on our minds. How many, to whom God sends trials, thus make light of them! They "try to make the best of them," as the world says—try to think as *little* of them as they can help. They rush into

pleasure, or folly, or sin, or into the whirl, and bustle, and excitement of this world's cares and duties, in order to keep them from dwelling on them. What is this but "despising" God's "chastenings?" He sends them to make us think, and think soberly, solemnly, deeply. He sends them that we should be led into our secret chamber, search our hearts and lives, and ask the serious question, "*Why* has God sent me this? What great end has He in view in permitting it?" This is the reason they are sent, and yet men try to drown them; to think as little of them as they can! Surely this is "despising the chastening of the Lord." They are sent in love. Man tries to put their solemn message away from him. He despises the Lord's chastening. Then God says, "I have spoken, but he will not hear:"—"Let him alone." Oh fearful words! Reader, "despise not *thou* the chastening of the Lord." Does not the Bible teach us that there is a point in man's history when God's patience and long-suffering end; when the stamp of reprobation is set upon the brow, and man is left "alone," an example of mercies and judgments neglected or abused, and gospel warnings despised? Beware, reader! The line which separates the day when man may be saved from the night when the light of mercy is withdrawn, may be passed unwittingly. The conscience may be at ease, the spirits gay, and life be

full of brightness and sunshine ; but by Him who searches the heart, it may be seen that such despisers of God's chastenings have passed the confines of hope, and have entered on that path, each step of which is deepening into the blackness of eternal darkness. Reader, especially unconverted reader, whom God has visited with many strokes, again I say, Beware ! “Despise not *thou* the chastening of the Lord.” See that they lead thee, as a poor sinner, to the feet of Jesus ; then all will be well.

But how is the child of God to receive these chastenings ? As proofs of a Father's love, and in His hands to produce, ere long, peaceable fruits of righteousness. This they *shall* do to His child, no matter how dark or grievous or bitter they may be. No greater proof of His love can He give us than by sending these strokes ; and though the flesh may quiver under their piercings, yet shall they produce blessed results. A day is coming, even here, when we shall surely praise Him for each one. Oh how we shall bless Him for them in heaven ! There we shall see how deep the love was that sent them ; but never fully till we are there. How these strokes are brightening the crown of glory for us ! How each one will make the golden harp vibrate more sweetly. How each one will add melody to the new song ! How loud will be our praises then, *most of all* for earth's “deep calling unto deep !”

And what effect should this have upon the believer's *present* course? "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed." What a practical word! Let us examine it in closing. The lifting up of the hands is the figure under which prayer is brought before us. "I will that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands." The same mode of engaging in prayer is brought before us in other parts of God's Word—the two hands being uplifted, in contrast to the heathen worshippers who lifted up only one. "The hanging down" of the hands therefore conveys to us the neglect of prayer, or the interruption of communion with God. The feebleness of the knee presents another view. It indicates the weakness of the body, its liability to fall, its tottering step and irregular walk. Spiritually it refers doubtless to "the race" to which the Apostle alludes. There can be no "*running*" in the race, where the knees are feeble. The chastisements and rebukes to which he had referred were "*weights*," and unless "laid aside" on Jesus, would make the hands "hang down" and the body stoop with their pressure. Wherefore the Apostle would say, "In the midst of these strokes, which are all loving messages from a Father's hand, be much in prayer, lift up the hands which hang down; also strengthen

X

the feeble knees by laying the 'weights' aside on Jesus. Thus will the soul become stronger, and will run the race with no feeble knee, with no tottering step, with no irregular walk."

But he adds, "and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed." We have thus the three parts of the body brought before us—the "hands," the "knees," the "feet." The *head* is not spoken of. Christ is our head. He is the life of the body. His finished work has given *life* to the soul; and the head of the spiritual body is *above*. Our *life* is "hid with Christ in God." Nothing can touch *that*, for it is in heaven. The members, however—the "hands," the "knees," the "feet" are on earth; and it is to these the passage now calls our attention. "Make straight paths." Why? Because you have "lame" members. You have a race to run. Take out of the paths all rough stones, all sharp thorns. The Lord is a tender, pitiful, gracious Father. He does not wish us to stumble. He wants to heal our lameness. He longs to see us "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might." He "looks mercifully upon our infirmities, and for the glory of His name would turn from us all those evils that we most righteously have deserved." There are few "paths" of God's people in which there are not many things over which we *may stumble*; and there are none of them who

have not "lame" members. There is in every Christian's "path" some stone against which the "lame" member within him is constantly stumbling. In some it is one thing, in some it is another. Perhaps, reader, your faith is weak. There is some point in your Christian faith which pierces you or proves a stumbling-block. Perhaps you cannot understand the immortality of the soul. The body dies, and we see nothing of the spirit. All seems as if we died like the brute creation. Perhaps it is something connected with the inspiration of the Word of God. "What have we on which to rest our faith? A few old parchment leaves, rudely inscribed by illiterate Galilean fishermen, rescued from the oblivion of corrupt and superstitious ages, which have been put together and called the Word of God." Perhaps this is your stone of stumbling. Or it may be some doubt about the pardon of your sins (though this ought not to be, for the Word of God is so explicit), or about your faith, or assurance, or prayers. Or it may be something altogether different from this—something you *cannot*, or *dare not* tell to others. Every time your secret heart comes in contact with it it worries you, distracts you, casts you down; and you feel that, go where you will or do what you will, it seems always in your way. Your lame member seems always to be running against it, and you are often nearly thrown down by this terrible

stumbling-stone! What is to be done? Only *one* thing, dear reader. Mark it well! "Lift up th hands that hang down, and the feeble knees." B much in prayer. "Lay aside the weight" on Jesus. Tell Him all about your lame member. Tell Him what is the thorn in your path, the stone o stumbling always in your way. Only thus wil you be able to "make straight paths for your feet. Only thus can the "lame" member be "healed. Oh yes, dear, tried, and tempted fellow-pilgrim *this* is the way! Have closer dealings with God. Depend upon it no weight will weigh heavily ver, long there. Depend upon it the path will be free from stumbling-blocks and lacerations then. D not try and grapple with these difficulties an longer. You have done that too long already. Take them to Jesus, and live nearer to Him. Thi is the remedy—the Divine panacea for your man; maladies. Only this. God grant that you may b oftener there than you have been! God grant tha the Lord may find you there in that solemn hou when He shall come "to take vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the Gospe of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is only for a littl while, and then every mystery shall be solved every cloud shall vanish for ever. Oh for faith to trust Him for this little while, for strength to live near to Him, for power to walk with Him. *God give you strength, dear friend, for this "on*

hour's watching," and yours shall be the everlasting song !

I know not what shall befall me,
God hangs a mist o'er my eyes ;
And so, each step in my onward path,
He makes new scenes to rise ;
And every joy He sends me, comes
As a strange and sweet surprise.

I see not a step before me
As I tread on another year ;
But the past is still in God's keeping—
The future His mercy shall clear ;
And what looks dark in the distance
May brighten as I draw near.

For perhaps the dreaded future
Has less bitter than I think ;
The Lord may sweeten the waters
Before I stoop to drink ;
Or, if Marah must be Marah,
He will stand beside the brink.

It may be, He has waiting
For the coming of my feet,
Some gift of such rare blessedness,
Some joy so strangely sweet,
That my lips shall only tremble,
With the thanks they cannot speak.

Oh ! restful, blissful ignorance !
'Tis blessed not to know !
It keeps me so still in those arms
Which will not let me go,
And hushes my soul to rest
On the bosom that loves me so.

So I go on, not knowing,
I would not if I might !
I would rather walk in the dark with God,
Than walk alone in the light—
I would rather walk with Him by faith
Than walk alone by sight.

My heart shrinks back from trials
That the future may disclose,
Yet I never had a sorrow
But what the dear Lord chose—
So I send the coming tears back
With the whispered words, "He knows."

VII.

THE MOURNER.

JOHN XX. 10-19.

BEREAVEMENT is the sharpest arrow in the quiver of God. Coming at a moment unexpected, it enters the heart and makes every fibre of the frame to quiver. Here all human consolation fails. Sweet as human sympathy is at all times, God has fixed a limit to it, beyond which it cannot pass. He has reserved to Himself the prerogative of administering sympathy to the bereaved heart. Only at His feet can the bleeding wounds be stanchd. Only on the bosom of Jesus can the throbbing heart find rest. Every other cistern is a broken one.

This is the lesson taught us in this narrative. Its opening words fall solemnly, but truthfully, upon us. "The disciples went away again to their own homes, but Mary stood without, at the sepulchre, weeping." While others have their homes whither they repair and find a resting-place,

the bereaved heart has, for a time, its only home in the sepulchre. There its fondest earthly treasure has been laid to rest. It may be drawn out for a time by the pressure of daily duties, or by the necessities and requirements of daily life; but when these are over it returns like a broken bow, in thought and affection, to the lonely churchyard or to the green sod, beneath which the remains of some loved one are sleeping. In the midst of worldly thoughts, or the social circle, or the ordinary conversation, it is far away, "stooping down and looking into this sepulchre"—weeping in secret, though the *outside* seems all fair.

Thus it was with Mary. Let us not blame those tears, but "weep with those who weep." What if faith was weak, and her thoughts should have been on a *living* Saviour, instead of being concentrated in that silent grave, is our faith always strong under the crushing blow? Do not a bleeding heart, and crowding thoughts, and a fevered brain, struggle fitfully with the faith within us, and sometimes well-nigh extinguish its light? Can faith be always calm under the pressure of a heart ready to burst? Let us mingle our tears with those of the Son of God, as we stand at the grave-sides of Bethany. The joyous voice, "I am the resurrection and the life," shall surely find its way to the secret springs of that heart, and restore *peace and joy*. In the meantime let us "bear one

another's burdens," remembering that sooner or later the crushing stroke must fall on our own hearts. Let us "fulfil the law of Christ" by taking some of that load (for we cannot take it all) upon ourselves. So shall we be a blessing to the mourner amid the desolation which reigns around.

But what did Mary weep for? For the *dead body*. The cold clay corpse she would have clasped to her heart. The dust was precious in her sight.

But why weep and look into that sepulchre? Why weep we so bitterly at our grave-sides? Our loved treasure is not there. The body may be, but the treasure is with the living Saviour. "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." The *treasure*—the living Saviour—was *outside* that sepulchre from the moment Mary came to it. So is it with us. From the moment we are called to stand at the grave-side of some loved one, the treasure is outside. Where is it? Do we want to know? Behold the living Saviour! It is with Him. Seeing Him, we see our loved one. "He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die." "Because I live, ye shall live also." The *life* of the corn *begins* just when death has overpowered the *seed*. So with our departed ones. In the last struggle of the failing tabernacle lies the germ of that life which shall last for ever. The spirit is with Jesus. We saw it not in its passage from the hushed chamber. The eye can see *only*

material things. *Spirit* alone can see *spirit*. It passed upward with a bound, and quicker than electric speed was in the presence of God. *Spirit* meets with no obstacle in *matter*. In its very nature it is independent of it. How we may thus be surrounded by these spirits none can tell. Not till our own spirit is released from the prison in which it is bound can we recognise our fellow spirits, who have passed on before us. These are mysterious subjects. We cannot solve them, nor is it necessary. Sufficient, abundantly sufficient for us, that the spirits of the blood-bought ones are "with Christ, which is far better." Believer, repose on this! It is only for a little while, and that body so familiar to thee, so vividly before thine eye, shall arise from its silent resting-place, whether in the ashes of Smithfield, amid the sands of the desert, beneath the monumental stone, or down in the watery deep. Soon thou shalt clasp it again to thine heart, with no hidden disease, no wasted cheek, no feverish gaspings, no taint of tears, or sorrow, or sin. In patience possess thy soul. Jesus will soon be here, and with Him thy fondly-cherished treasure. "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

But death has no victory over the Lord's sleeping ones. Where their dust lies, there is "victory" graven with the pen of heaven. Behold it here at *this sepulchre*! Though the treasure is not there,

there is something very glorious. Angels, the messengers of heaven, are in that sepulchre. There they sit in an attitude of *triumph*. They proclaim the victory over death. They seem to say to all who weep for them which sleep in Jesus, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Surely it speaks to us with the same voice. There is victory and triumph in our sepulchres—heaven's victory, heaven's triumph, heaven's repose. Angels are *sitting* there. They are the guardians of the precious dust. "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Is not the *body* redeemed as well as the *soul*? Is not *it* a part of the "heir of salvation?" Are they not sent "to minister" for *it*, as well as for the spirit which once inhabited it? Is not part of that ministry to watch over and preserve it for the morning of resurrection? Let us not speculate. Reader, these thoughts are no necessary part of thy faith. Dismiss them for higher and nobler ones, if there be aught of speculation. Rest in the Word, only in the Word. Take nothing for *granted* but what is clearly revealed. The Lord direct your heart into all truth.

Angels can say, "Why weepest thou?" but they can go no farther. Only Jesus can speak the word, "Mary," that shall heal the desolate heart. Yet how quickly Jesus can do it. He has only to

speaking *one* word, and the mourner's tears are dry and the heart leaps up in gladness. O reader! think of this! Go to Jesus, to Jesus only, with thy sorrow. That sorrow is "too deep for human ministry." Even angels are but broken cisterns. Oh, try Jesus! Deal very closely with Him. There unfold again and again thy oft-told tale. He will not weary of it, though thy nearest and dearest may. Oh, try Jesus! See how soon He can gladden the desolate heart. Prove His all-sufficiency, His wondrous love, His tenderness and pity! There is none like Jesus! Lean on that bosom, dear suffering friend, then will you wonder you did not go before; then will you marvel you should so long have carried that load which is now sinking you beneath its weight. Oh, try Jesus!

"Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing Him to be the gardener, saith unto Him, Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away." There is a point in all sorrow, which if we pass, that sorrow, however sacred, becomes *sin*. That point Mary had now reached. Mark the climax. First she came to the sepulchre with tears in her eyes, and again and again stooped down and looked within. Next she exclaims in agony, "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have *laid Him*." But now that agony is at its height.

The heart is ready to burst. She cries out, in the wildness of her grief, "Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, *tell me* where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away." The point is reached. One step beyond, and all sorrow is sin. If God's child is to be spared, He must now interfere. At this point the Lord steps in. He cries—"Mary!" Why does He call her thus suddenly by her name? To draw away her heart and thoughts from the sepulchre to the living Saviour. This is always the Lord's call. He is ever so speaking as to call us away from our sepulchres to the living Saviour. It is as if He would say, "Gaze not down into those gloomy depths too long. Let not sorrow blind your eyes to a living Saviour. Look not there, but here. 'I am He that liveth.' I have your treasure. Look to me." Dear Christian mourner, remember this. There is a point in all sorrow, which if you pass, it becomes sin. What point is that? The point reached by Mary in this narrative—when sorrow blinds the eyes to a living Saviour. He was before her, but she could not see Him for her tears. Oh, dear fellow-sufferer, let not this be thy case! Sorrow, but "not as others who have no hope." Weep, but not so that your tears hinder you from gazing upon a living Saviour at your side.

"She turned herself, and saith unto Him, Rabboni." Now Mary's back is on the sepulchre, and

her face towards Jesus. Oh, blessed leading of God's hand! May all our sorrows bring us there! Precious sorrow, that leads us to gaze upon Jesus! Precious trial, that ends in bringing us to His feet!

In the revulsion of feeling consequent on recognising the Saviour, Mary would have rushed forward to embrace Him. "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; *for* I am not yet ascended to my Father." We may learn a precious truth here. The Saviour would teach us that when in *heaven* He could be touched more powerfully, more effectually on our behalf; that heaven's sympathy, heaven's comfort, heaven's succour, are far more valuable, more effectual than those of earth or of mere natural affection. "Come to me when I am ascended. Touch me at the mercy-seat. There will you find a Father's bosom to lean upon, a Father's hand to dry your tears, a Father's arm clasped around you. This will be more blessed to you than, in the outburst of natural affection, embracing me on earth." He would thus show us that though earthly affection and sympathy are sweet, there is a loving sympathy on high sweeter than it all. Oh, dear afflicted one, forget it not! Thy nearest, thy dearest, thy truest Friend is on high. The devoted love of a mother, a wife, a husband, a child, is nothing compared with His. *Make Him* everything to thee. Take *Him* into

the first place in thy heart. Let not the *dearest* earthly treasure come between thee and Jesus. Thou wilt find Him *always* true, *always* faithful, *always* at hand. Jesus is so precious in sorrow's hour. Oh, try Him, and see how His dear presence can make a heaven for thy soul in the midst of thy deep desolation of spirit!

"But go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things unto her." Two precious truths are presented to us here. "Go to my brethren," says the Saviour. The love of Mary to the Saviour was intense. He shows us in these words what direction such love should ever take. It should prove its true character by being shown to "the brethren." "Do you so love me? then go and show it to my brethren. Comfort their weeping hearts with the joyous news that I am risen from the dead." The same truth is presented to us in the chapter following this. "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Feed my lambs"—"go to my brethren." Thus will you show that you love me.

The other truth presented to us is a practical one. What is God's end in sending trial? His strokes have a meaning. Each one has a gracious, loving, and wise purpose. None are purposeless.

Let us never think so. They are to quicken us in the heavenward race, to stir us up to more watchfulness, more earnestness, more heavenliness. This is the legitimate effect of all trial. "Now for a swifter race," said one of old, on whom God's hand had been heavily laid. "Go to my brethren," said the Saviour, and "Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord." There was no longer the brooding in sorrow at the sepulchre. All was now earnestness and energy, an eager pressing forward with the glad news, a vessel filled with that joy which only the sight of a living Saviour can give, a precious messenger with a glorious message on her lips coming fresh from an overflowing heart and drying the tears of a weeping Church. These are the blessed effects of the strokes of heaven on our hearts. "Now for a swifter race!" Mourner at the sepulchre, think of this. Stay not brooding in sorrow at that cheerless vault. Up and work for God with renewed energy and zeal. Get nearer to Jesus. Ask Him to fill the emptied vessel with His glory. Ask Him to unbind every tie that has bound thee to a dying world. Ask Him to send thee forth to the weeping ones on every side of thee with whispers of comfort that shall lift them nearer to Him. Linger not "as those who have no hope" over the sleeping dust of thy loved one. It shall soon be here again *in a form far more bright and lovely than ever*

thou hast gazed upon it on earth. Meanwhile
“onward, upward, heavenward, homeward”—nearer
and nearer to Jesus! “Now for a swifter race!”
Now for a holier walk with God! Now for a more
earnest pressing toward the mark for the prize!
Up and work for God in a way thou hast never
done yet! The time is very short. The days are
all numbered. The Lord is on the way. Hearest
thou not the sound of His chariot wheels in the
distance! Up, speak, write, warn the world! Let
none pass by thee without the Master’s warning.
Let no blood of souls rest on *thy* head. Let no
voice cry out at the bar of God that thou hast been
unfaithful to thy solemn trust. Let not fear or
sloth or sin dim the brightness of that crown which
shall be placed that day on thy brow. O Lord of
light and love and mercy, speak to the mourner’s
heart; speak, and let that heart hear thy solemn
message, for Jesus Christ’s sake!

I shine in the light of God;
His likeness stamps my brow;
Through the valley of death my feet have trod,
And I reign in glory now!

No breaking heart is here,
No keen and thrilling pain,
No wasted cheek, where the frequent tear
Hath rolled and left its stain.

I have reached the joys of heaven :
I am one of the sainted band ;
For my head a crown of gold is given,
And a harp is in my hand.

I have learned the song they sing
Whom Jesus has set free,
And the glorious walls of heaven still ring
With my new-born melody.

No sin, no grief, no pain ;
Safe in my happy home ;
My fears all fled, my doubts all slain,
My hour of triumph's come !

Oh ! friends of mortal years,
The trusted and the true !
Ye are watching still in the valley of tears,
But I'll wait to welcome you.

Do I forget ? oh no !
For memory's golden chain
Shall bind *my* heart to the hearts below
Till they meet and touch again.

Each link is strong and bright :
And love's electric flame
Flows freely down like a river of light,
To the world from whence I came.

Do you mourn when another star
Shines out from the glittering sky?
Do you weep when the raging voice of war
And the storms of conflict die?

Then why should your tears run down,
And your hearts be sorely riven,
For another gem in the Saviour's crown,
And another soul in heaven?

THE END.



WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

THE SAVIOUR PROPHET: Lessons from the Life of Elisha. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

SHADOWS OF THE GREAT SACRIFICE; or, The Altar, the Bekah, and the Shoe. 16mo, 1s. cloth.

VOICES FROM THE VALLEY TESTIFYING OF JESUS. Small crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

TRUTH IN CHRIST. Small crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

EARTHLY SHADOWS OF THE HEAVENLY KINGDOM. Small crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

CHRIST IN THE WORD. Small crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

THE CHANGED ONES: Reflections on the Second Chapter of the Song of Solomon. 16mo, 1s. cloth.

Cheap Edition, crown 8vo, price 6d. sewed ;
1s. 6d. cloth,

MEMORIALS OF FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL.

By her Sister, **MARIA V. G. HAVERGAL.**

With Portrait and other Illustrations.

LONDON: JAMES NISBET & CO., 21 BERNERS STREET, W.



WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

THE SAVIOUR PROPHET: *Lessons from the Life of Elisha.* Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

SHADOWS OF THE GREAT SACRIFICE, or, The Altar, the Bekah, and the Ezer. *Man, 1s. cloth.*

VOICES FROM THE VALLEY TESTIFYING OF JESUS. Small crown 8vo, 2s. 6d. cloth.

TRUTH IN CHRIST. Small crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

EARTHLY SHADOWS OF THE HEAVENLY KING. Small crown 8vo, 3s. 6d. cloth.

THE WORLD. Small crown 8vo, 3s. 6d.

RED OIL: Reflections on the Second of the 2nd. 16mo, 1s. cloth.

price 6d. each.

RIDLEY HAYES.

V. G. HAYES.

with Illustrations.

JAMES NISBET & CO.'S
NEW AND FORTHCOMING BOOKS.

SWISS LETTERS AND ALPINE POEMS.

By the late **FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL.**

With Twelve Illustrations of Alpine Scenery and Flowers, by the
Baroness **HELGA VON CRAMM.**

Small 4to, cloth, extra gilt, 12s.

THEOLOGY.

THE HOMILETICAL LIBRARY. By the Rev. Canon
SPENCE, M.A., and the Rev. J. S. EXELL, M.A. Vol. I., con-
taining Sermons appropriate for Advent, Christmas, and the
New Year. Demy 8vo, cloth, 7s. 6d. (To be completed in
8 vols.)

THE CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES: Their Unparalleled
Claims, their History, and their Authority. Being the Croall
Lecture for 1882. By the Rev. Professor CHARTERIS, D.D.
Demy 8vo, cloth, 7s. 6d.

HOMILETICS. By the Rev. JAMES HOPPIN, Professor
in Yale College. Large 8vo, 12s. 6d.

THE ELDER AND HIS FRIENDS. By the Rev. A.
M. SYMINGTON, D.D. Small crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

**THE MODERN HEBREW AND THE HEBREW
CHRISTIAN.** By the Rev. E. BASSIN. Crown 8vo, cloth,
4s. 6d.

JOHN THE APOSTLE. By the Rev. JOHN THOMSON.
Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

**FRAGMENTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF THE
EARLY CHRISTIAN AUTHORS.** Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

THE KINGDOM OF ALL-ISRAEL: Its History and
Literature. By JAMES SIMS. 8vo, cloth, 15s.

THE APOCALYPSE: A Series of Special Lectures on the Revelation of Jesus Christ. With Revised Text. 3 vols. 450-500 pp. in each. 8vo, cloth, 12s.

BIOGRAPHY.

JOYFUL SERVICE: A Sketch of the Life and Work of Emily Staufeld. By her SISTER. Crown 8vo, cloth, with Portrait, 3s.

LIFE OF MRS. COLIN VALENTINE. By Mrs. GEORGE CUPPLES. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

RELIGIOUS AND DEVOTIONAL.

BRIGHT AND FAIR. A Book for Young Ladies. By the Rev. GEORGE EVERARD, M.A. 16mo, cloth, 1s.

MY CONFIRMATION: Before and After. By the Same. 18mo, paper, 3d.; cloth, 6d.

THE PRINCE IN THE MIDST. By Miss NUGENT. 16mo, cloth, 1s.

GOD'S ANSWERS: The Narrative of Miss Annie Macpherson's Work at the Home of Industry, Spitalfields. By Miss LOWE. Crown 8vo, illustrated, cloth, 3s. 6d.

REMINISCENCES OF THE ZULU WAR: A Record of the Work of the Army Scripture Readers' Association, by a Staff Sergeant. 16mo, cloth.

EVENING STARS. By Mrs. EVERED POOLE. 32mo, cloth, 9d.

This volume is written on the plan intended to have been carried out by Miss F. R. Havergal, as described in the Preface to "Morning Stars."

VISITING TEXT-BOOK. By the Rev. CHARLES NEIL, M.A. Small crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

EARLY IN THE MORNING. By the Rev. GORDON CALTHROP. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

CHARACTERISTICS OF HUMAN LIFE. By T. ABBOTT HOWE. Crown 8vo, cloth, 5s.

WELLS OF THE BIBLE. By Mrs. SIMPSON, Author of "Steps through the Stream," &c. Square 16mo, cloth elegant, 1s.

THE LORD'S PURSEBEARERS. By HESBA STRETTON. Crown 8vo, cloth, 1s. 6d.

BOOK OF ANTHEMS. Compiled and Arranged for Use in Churches and Families. By E. J. HOPKINS, Organist in the Temple Church.

THE PSALMS OF DAVID, BIBLE VERSION, Pointed for Chanting, by Sir HERBERT OAKELEY, Mus. Doc., and adapted by him to appropriate Chants. Crown 8vo, cloth.

A NOBLE VINE. By the Rev. J. JACKSON WRAY. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d.

ADDRESSES. By the Rev. F. PIGOU, D.D. Crown 8vo, cloth, 2s. 6d.

THE LIGHT OF THE MORNING. By Miss ANNA WARNER. 32mo, cloth extra, 10d.

FOR THE YOUNG.

THE BATTERY AND THE BOILER; or, The Electrical Adventures of a Telegraph Cable Layer. By R. M. BALLANTYNE. Crown 8vo, cloth, Illustrated, 5s.

THE KITTEN PILGRIMS; or, Battles which all must Fight. By the Same. Small 4to, cloth, with numerous Illustrations, 5s.

THE STORY OF A SHELL: A Romance of the Sea, with some Sea Teachings. A Book for Boys and Girls. By the Rev. J. R. MACDUFF, D.D. Small 4to, cloth, with numerous Illustrations, 6s.

DECIMA'S PROMISE. By AGNES GIBERNE. Crown 8vo, cloth, Illustrated. 3s. 6d.

EXPELLED. The Story of a Young Gentleman. By BERNARD HELDMANN. Crown 8vo, cloth, Illustrated, 5s.

HOW THEY DID. By GRACE STEBBING. Crown 8vo, cloth, Illustrated, 5s.

REX AND REGINA. By Mrs. MARSHALL. Crown 8vo, cloth, Illustrated, 5s.

LONDON: JAMES NISBET & CO., 21 BERNERS STREET, W.



